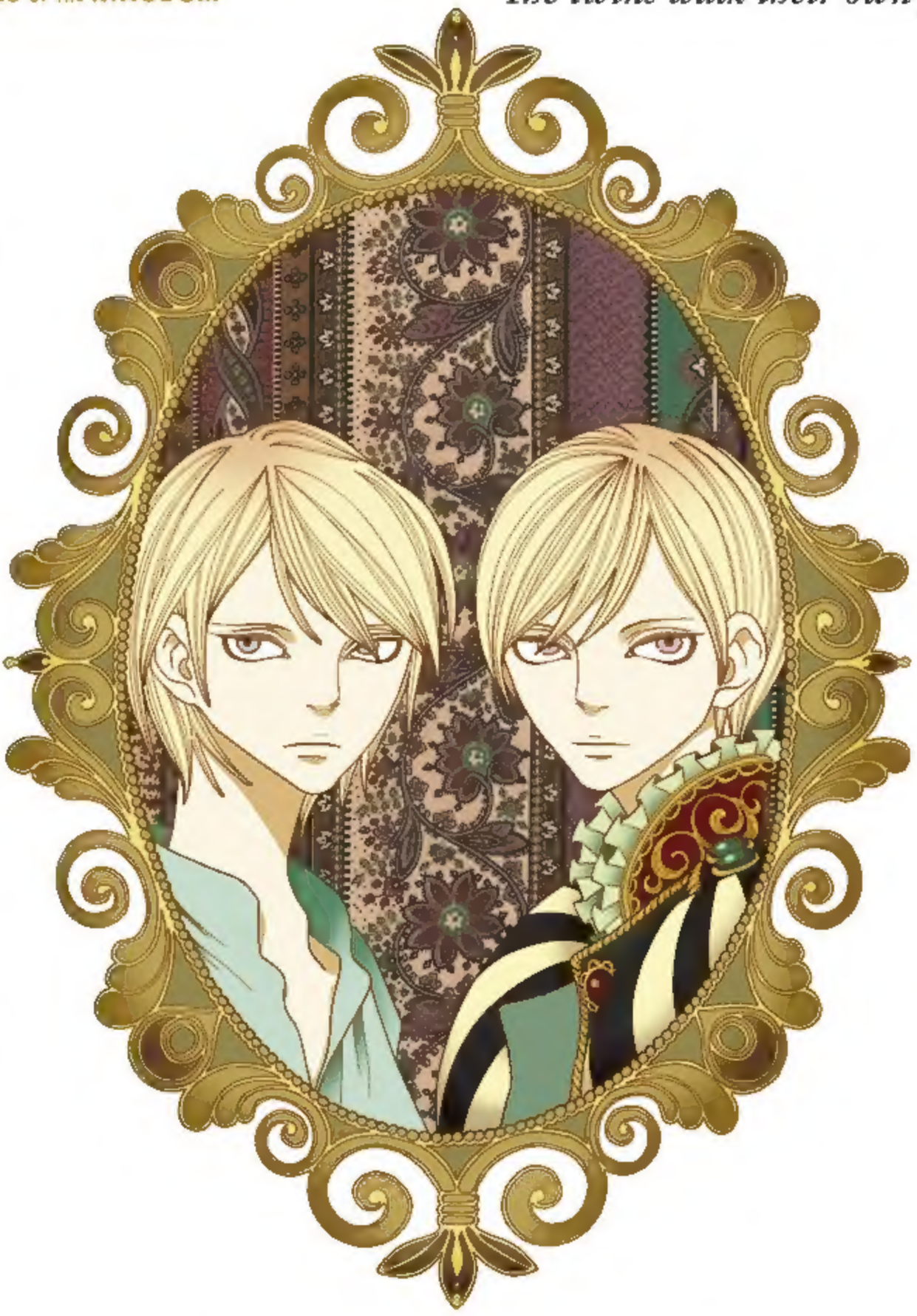
シリーズ
王国物語
TALES OF THE KINGDOM

Governed by the wheel of Fate,
Purple-eyed Ardalte and blue-eyed Ardolte,
The twins walk their own paths.

ARDOLTE & ARDALTE



Asumiko Nakamura

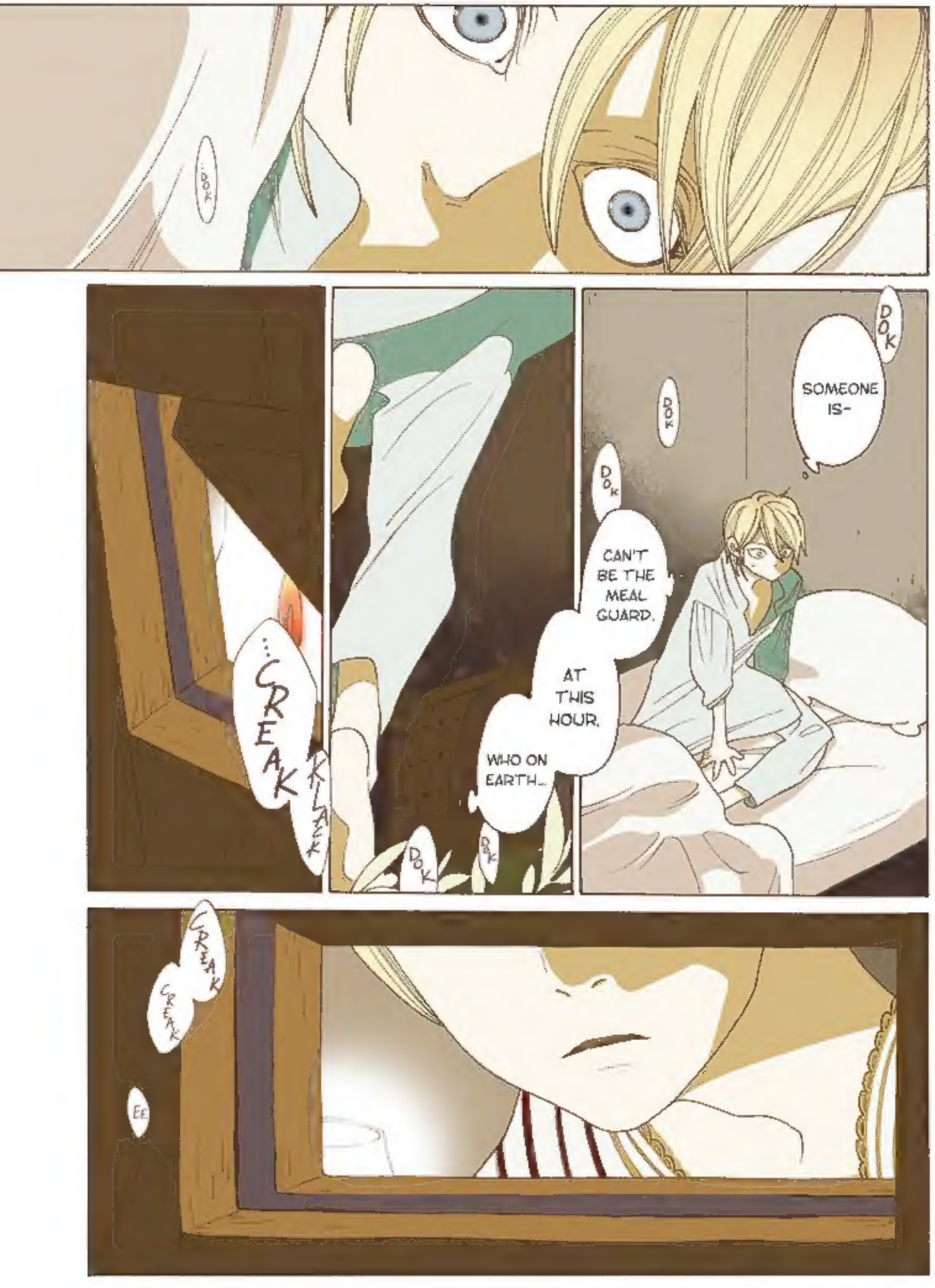
中村明日美子

TN: Their names were written originally with stress on the first syllable; i.e. AR-dolte, AR-dalte (アードルテとアーダルテ).

TALES OF THE KINGDOM

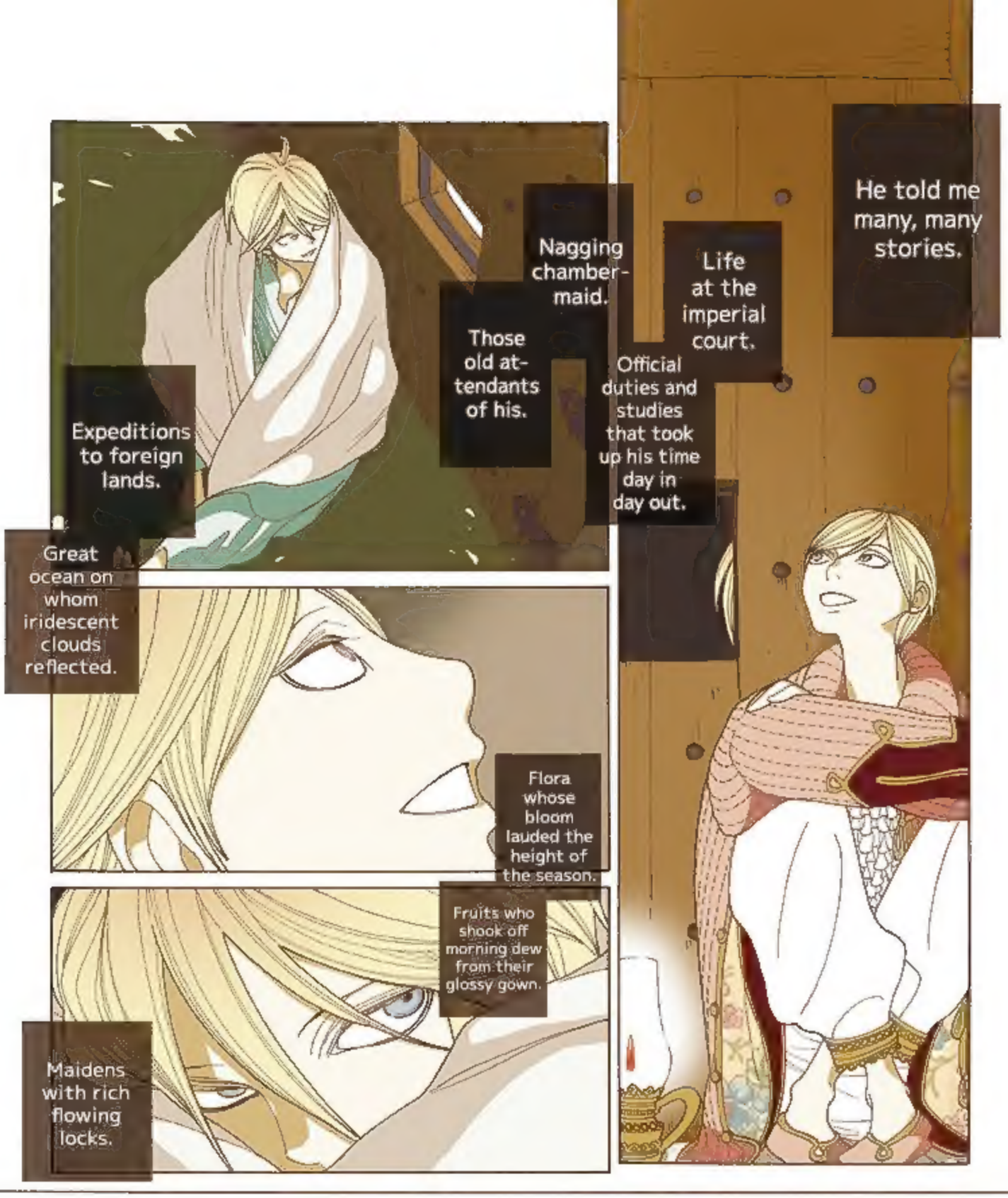
Ardolte is my name.
When I was young, I had a wet nurse.

She took care of my three meals and put me to bed.
When she passed away, I became truly alone.
Each time her gaze fell on me wept she, 'How pitiful, oh how pitiful'.
One night in that wonted solitude,
DOK..
DOK

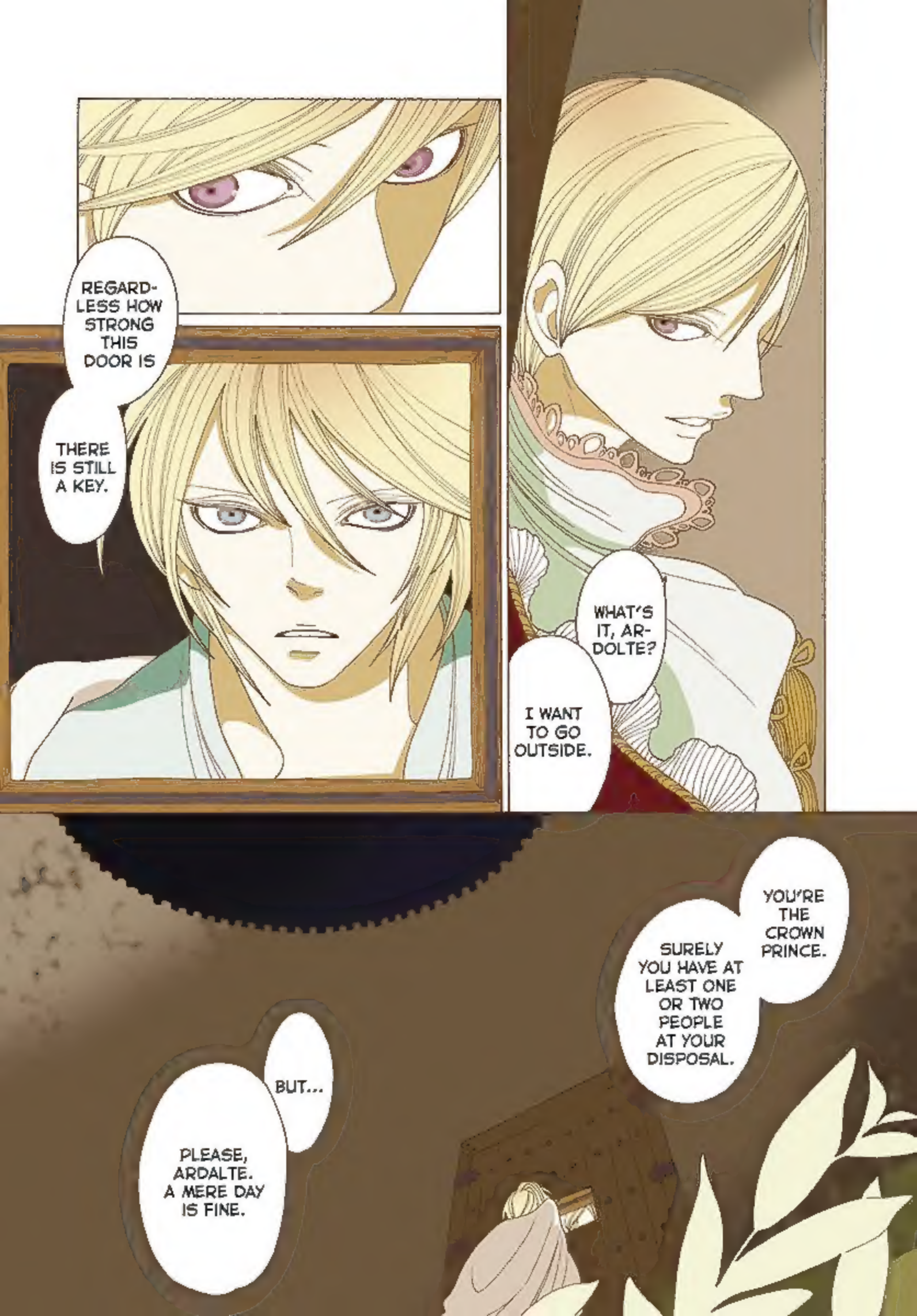

DOK
DOK
SOMEONE IS-
DOK
DOK
CAN'T BE THE MEAL GUARD.
AT THIS HOUR.
WHO ON EARTH...
DOK
DOK
...CREAK
KLAEK
CREAK
CREAK
EE

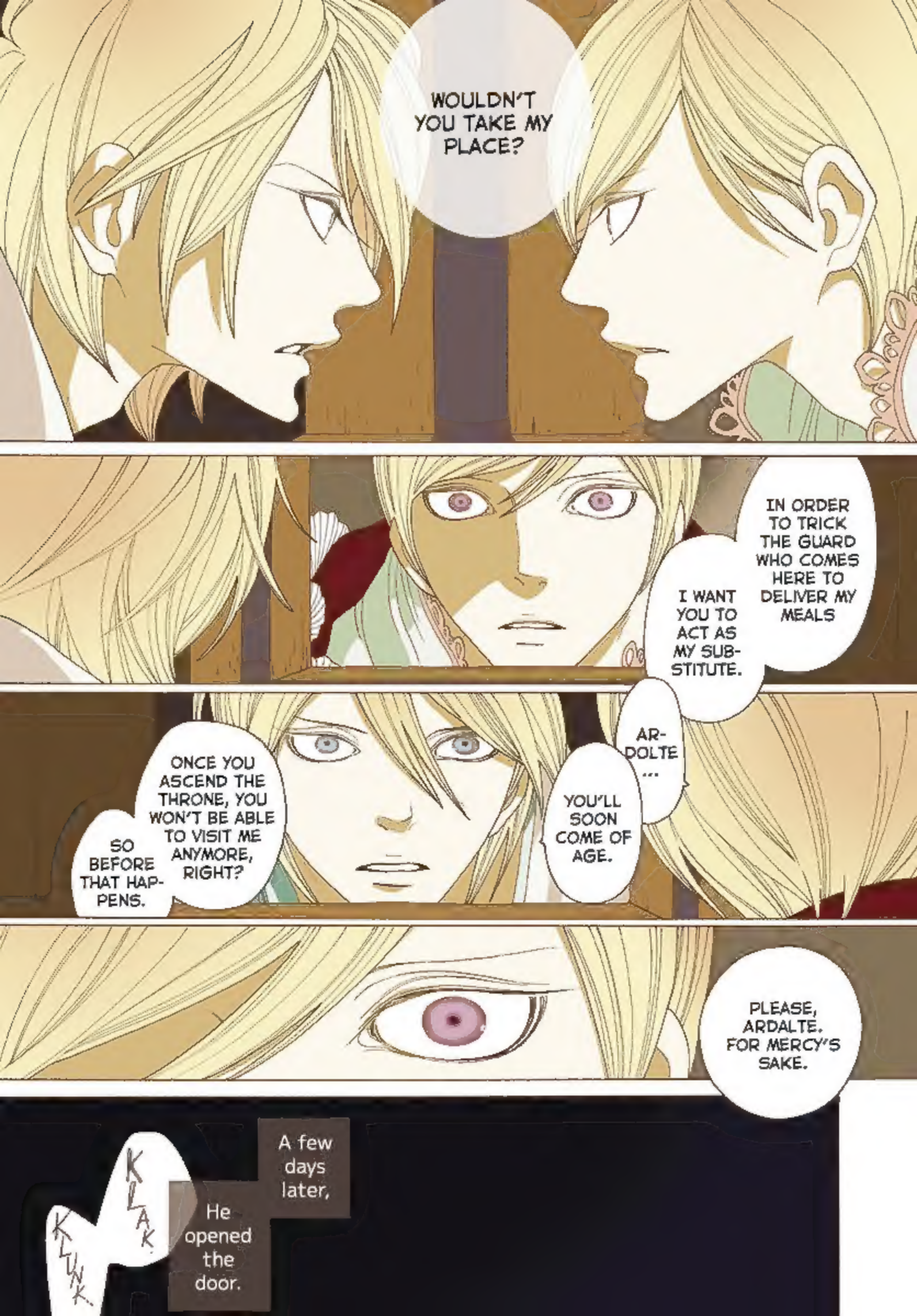
...MIRROR?
DECLARE YOUR IDENTITY.
YOU'RE WRONG.
WHO'RE YOU?
...THAT SHOULD BE MY LINE.
DECLARE YOURSELF FIRST.

Thus began our clandestine rendezvous, night after night…


He told me many, many stories.
Life at the imperial court.
Official duties and studies that took up his time day in day out.
Nagging chamber-maid.
Those old at-tendants of his.
Expeditions to foreign lands.
Great ocean on whom iridescent clouds reflected.
Flora whose bloom lauded the height of the season.
Fruits who shook off morning dew from their glossy gown.
Maidens with rich flowing locks.

ARDALTE.
It took the form of envy.
And before long.
Yearning grew into coveting.


I WANT TO GO OUTSIDE.
WHAT'S IT, ARDOLTE?
REGARDLESS HOW STRONG THIS DOOR IS
THERE IS STILL A KEY.
YOU'RE THE CROWN PRINCE.
SURELY YOU HAVE AT LEAST ONE OR TWO PEOPLE AT YOUR DISPOSAL.
BUT...
PLEASE, ARDALTE. A MERE DAY IS FINE.

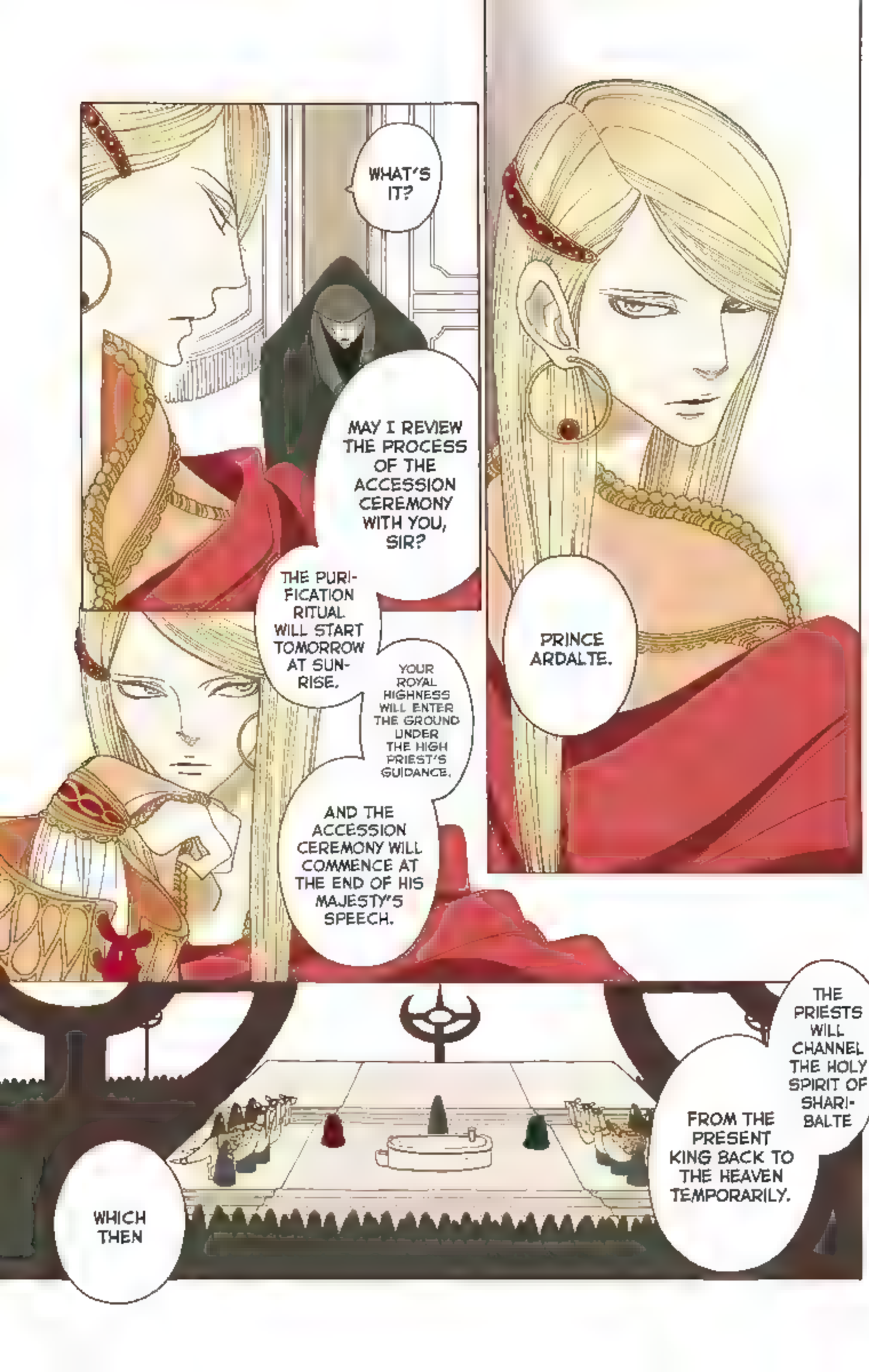

WOULDN'T YOU TAKE MY PLACE?
IN ORDER TO TRICK THE GUARD WHO COMES HERE TO DELIVER MY MEALS
I WANT YOU TO ACT AS MY SUB-STITUTE.
AR-DOLTE ...
YOU'LL SOON COME OF AGE.
ONCE YOU ASCEND THE THRONE, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO VISIT ME ANYMORE, RIGHT?
SO BEFORE THAT HAP-PENS.
PLEASE, ARDALTE. FOR MERCY'S SAKE.
A few days later,
He opened the door.
KLAK
KLUNK.

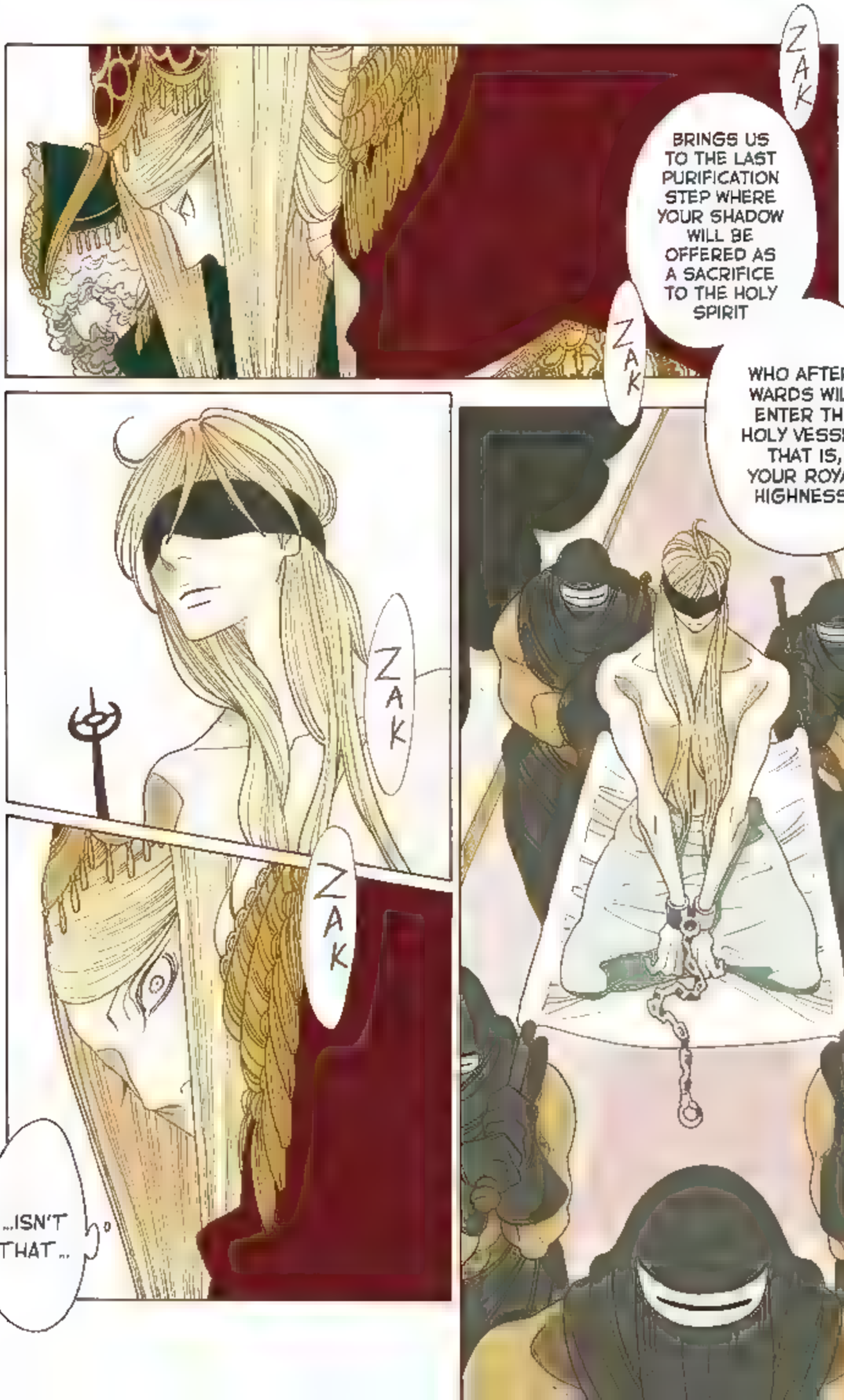
EEK...
EEH
EEH

I'LL RETURN SOON.
KRE...
EK
KLUNK.

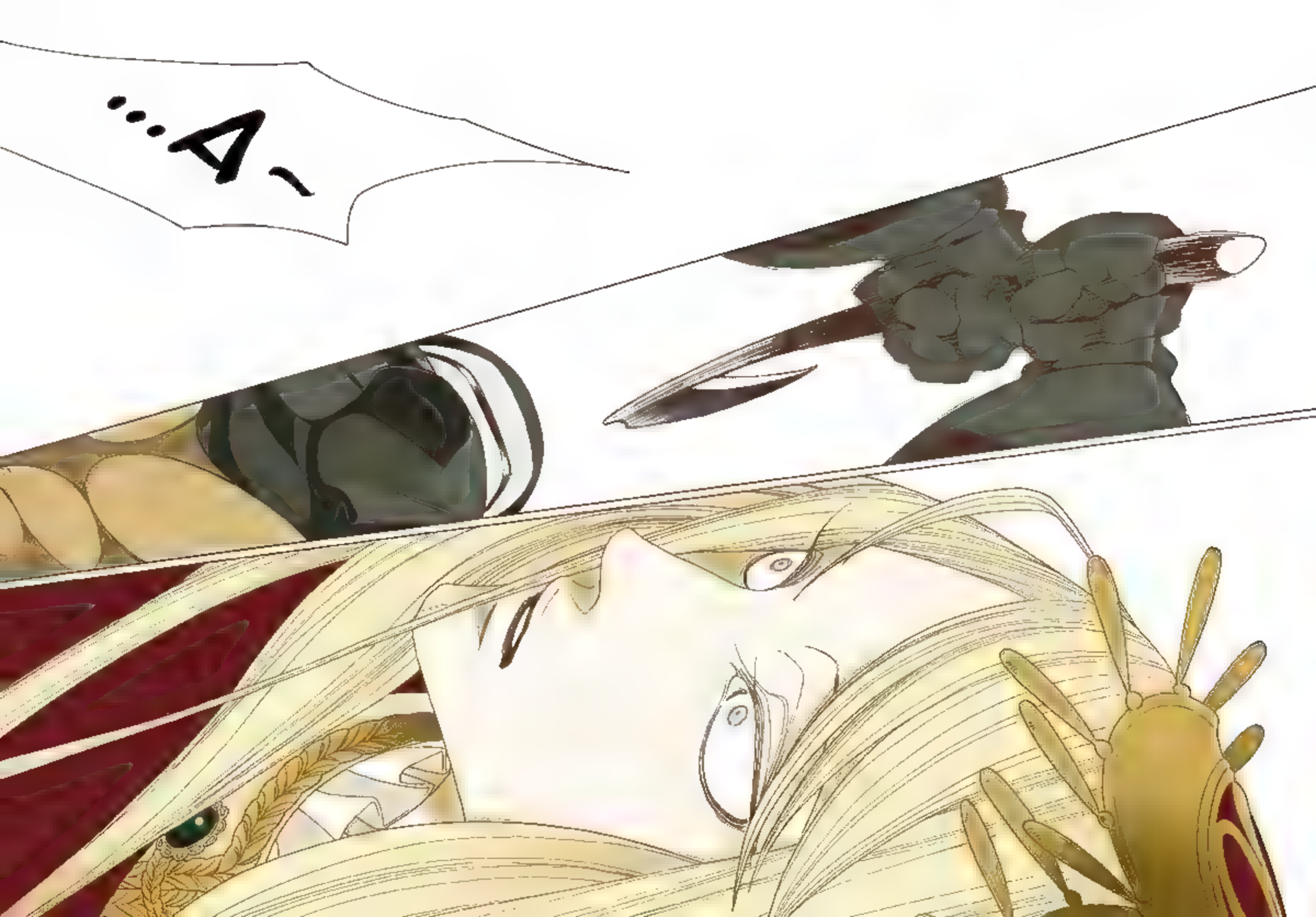
And so, several years have come to pass.

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS


PRINCE ARDALTE.
WHAT'S IT?
MAY I REVIEW THE PROCESS OF THE ACCESSION CEREMONY WITH YOU, SIR?
THE PURIFICATION RITUAL WILL START TOMORROW AT SUNRISE.
YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS WILL ENTER THE GROUND UNDER THE HIGH PRIEST'S GUIDANCE.
AND THE ACCESSION CEREMONY WILL COMMENCE AT THE END OF HIS MAJESTY'S SPEECH.
WHICH THEN
FROM THE PRESENT KING BACK TO THE HEAVEN TEMPORARILY.
THE PRIESTS WILL CHANNEL THE HOLY SPIRIT OF SHARIBALTE

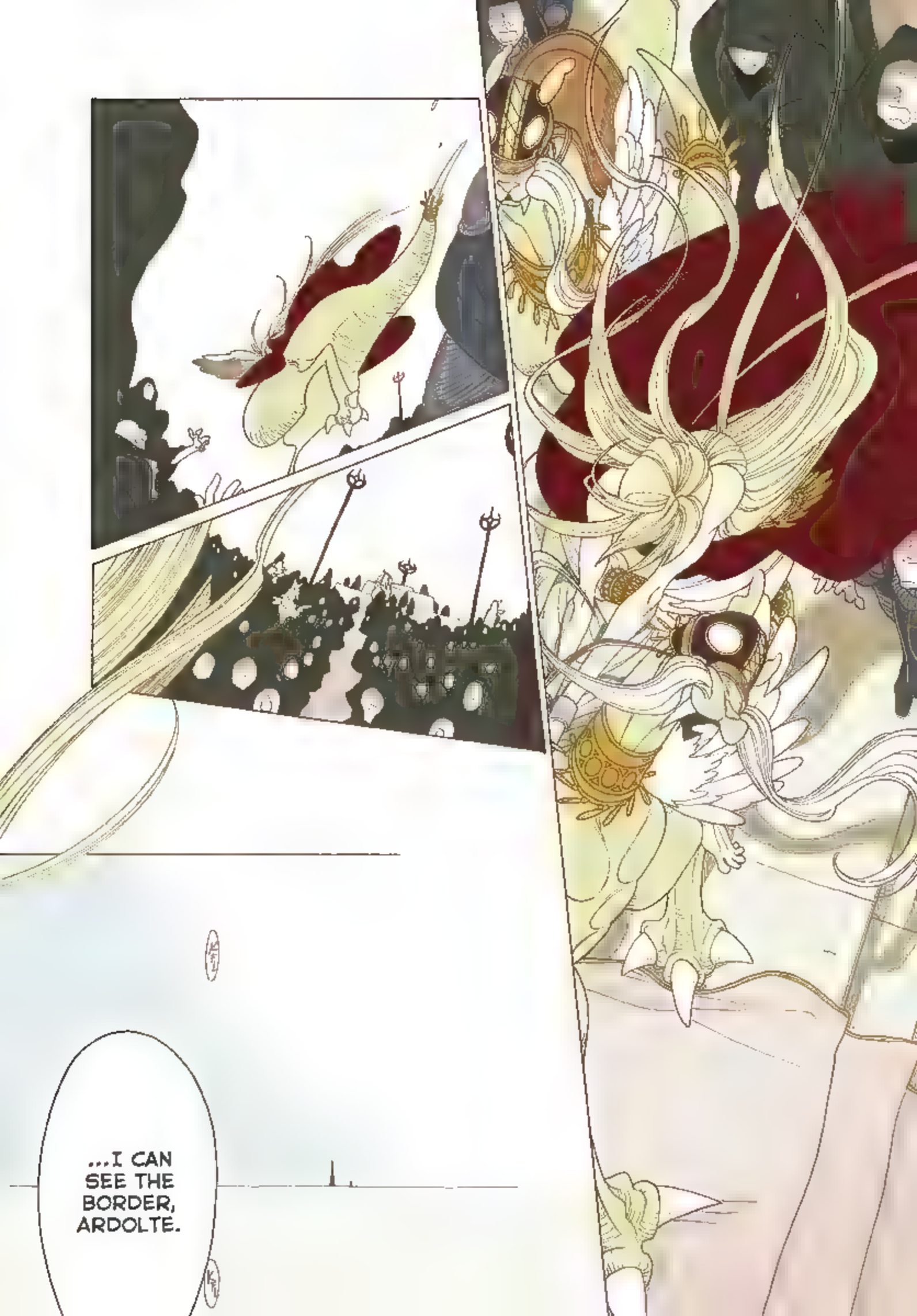

ZAK
BRINGS US TO THE LAST PURIFICATION STEP WHERE YOUR SHADOW WILL BE OFFERED AS A SACRIFICE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
ZAK
WHO AFTER-WARDS WILL ENTER THE HOLY VESSEL, THAT IS, YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS.
ZAK
ZAK
ZAK
...ISN'T THAT...

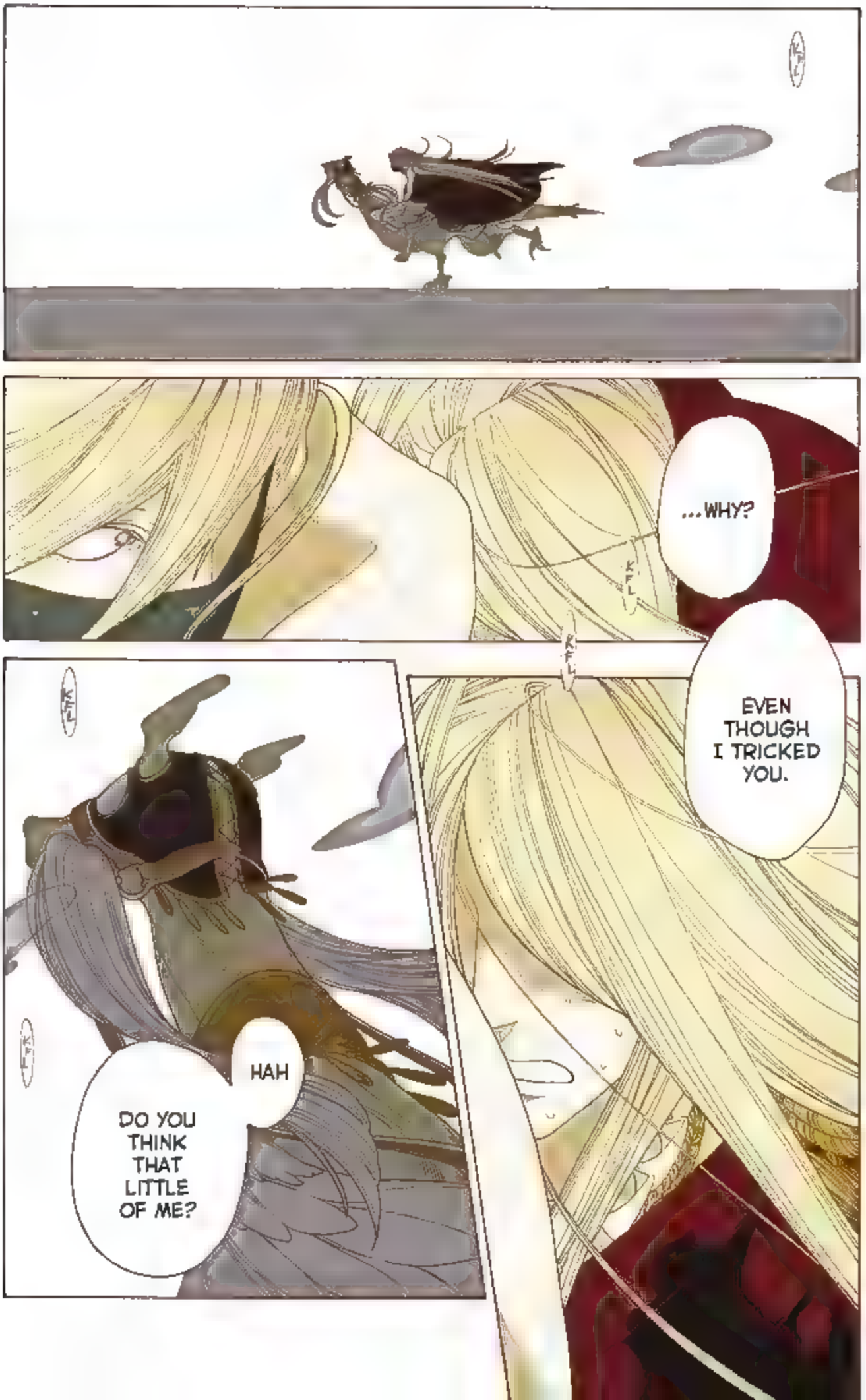
me.


...A~

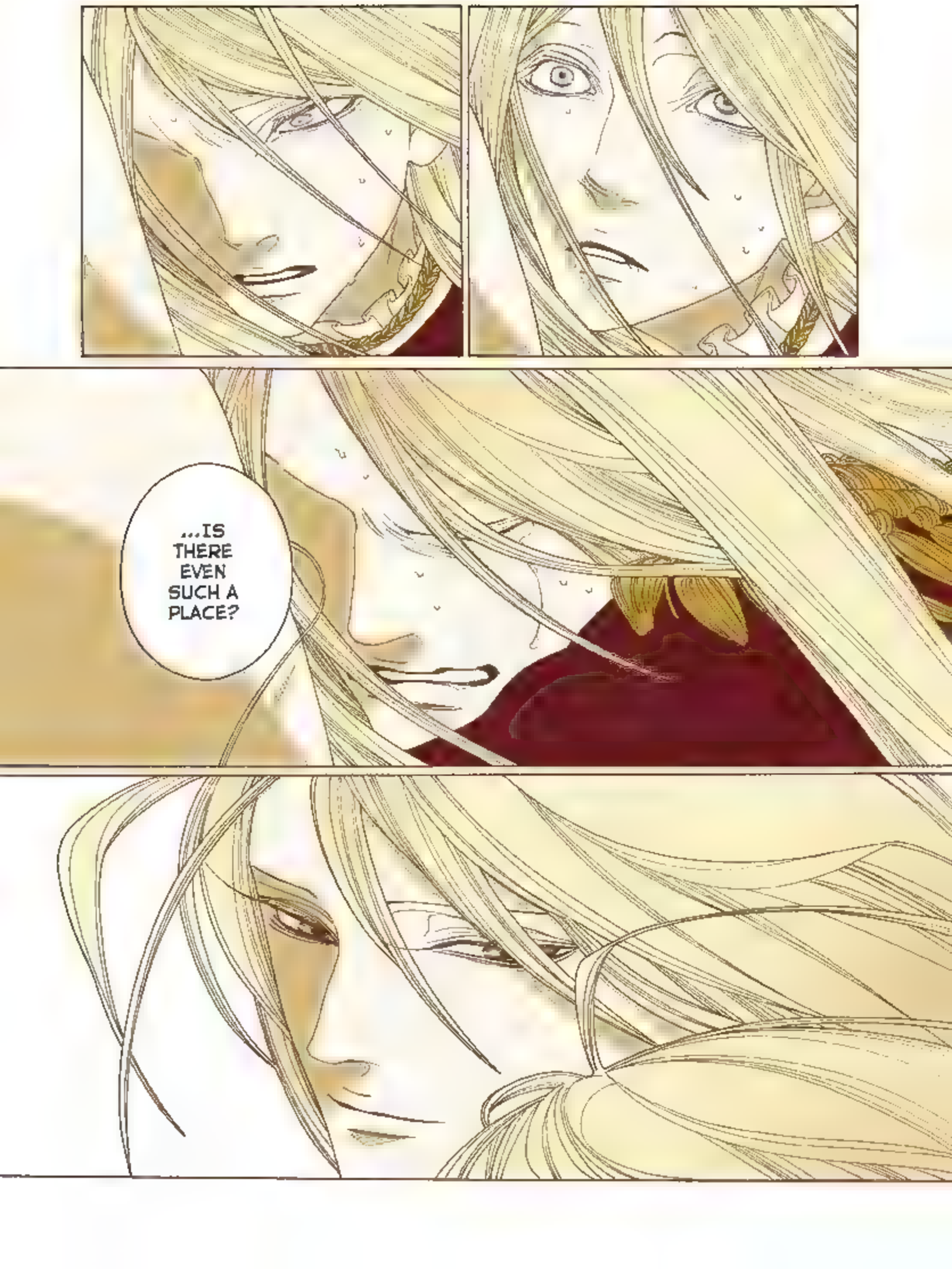
WSH
AAAH
YOUR ROYAL HIGH-NESS!!

YOUR ROYAL HIGH-NESS.
YOUR ROYAL HIGH-NESS.
IS IT THE IMPERIAL RESIS-TANCE?!
WHAT HAP-PENED?


...I CAN SEE THE BORDER, ARDOLTE.


...WHY?
EVEN THOUGH I TRICKED YOU.
HAH
DO YOU THINK THAT LITTLE OF ME?

I AM THE CROWN PRINCE OF THE FOURTEENTH SHARIBALTE KING, ARDALTE, YOU KNOW.
WE'RE GOING TO THE WORLD WHERE NEITHER ARDALTE NOR ARDOLTE EXISTS.
HOWEVER, I NEED THIS NAME NO LONGER.


...IS THERE EVEN SUCH A PLACE?

*You can read the original Japanese version here for free:
http://www.tonarinoyj.jp/manga/yj_mj/

whatever-project.com
Raw: Rebecca
TL: Tranquil Melancholy
PR1: saorren
PR2: Yuki
CL: Lapis, Blankblink
D TS: KateDeathWish
SFX TS: Mia
QC: Tranquil Mleancholy

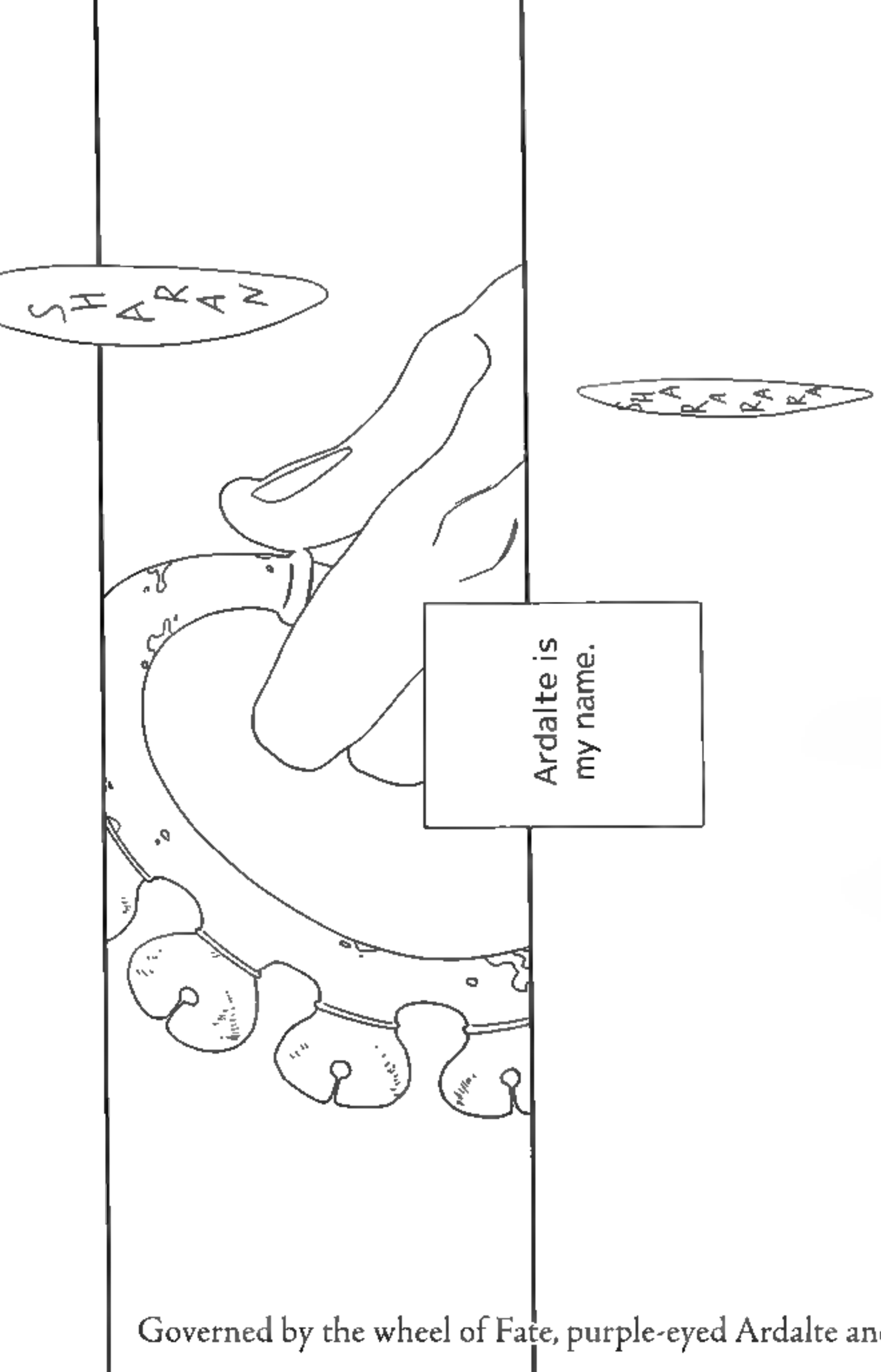
Some-
where
In a
land
Once
upon a
time
Far, far
away

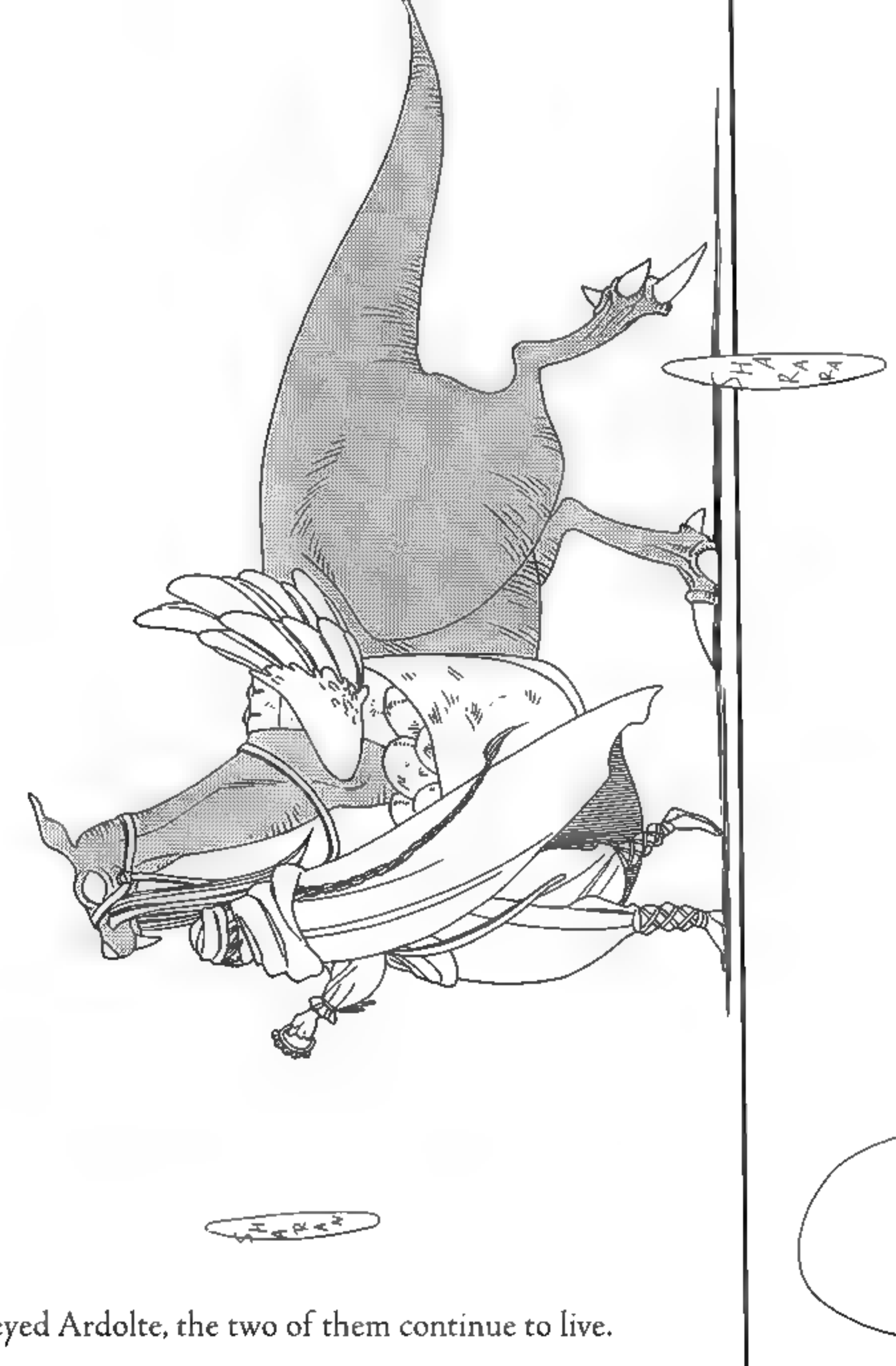
中村明日美子

Fated as twins.
You are my raison d'être.

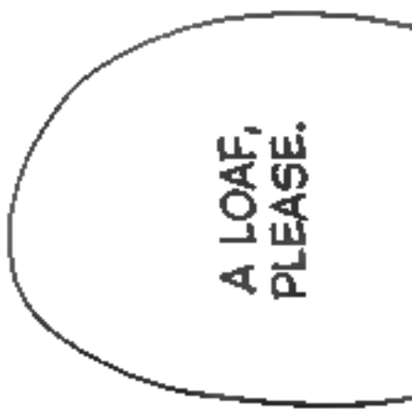
TH

AR DALTE & ARDOUTE





Governed by the wheel of Fate, purple-eyed Ardalte and blue-eyed Ardolte, the two of them continue to live.



I WANT ONE LOAF.

ME TOO

ONE.

TWO.

YES.

SAME HERE.

I WILL HAVE

ONE.

YES.

SHARA

SHARA

SHARA

I'VE RETURNED.

OH.

THEY SOLD OUT QUITE FAST TODAY.

WITH A YOUNG MAN LIKE YOU AROUND, MY BUSINESS'S BOOMING.

HERE.

YOU'RE A BIG HELP.

YOUR WAGE FOR TODAY.

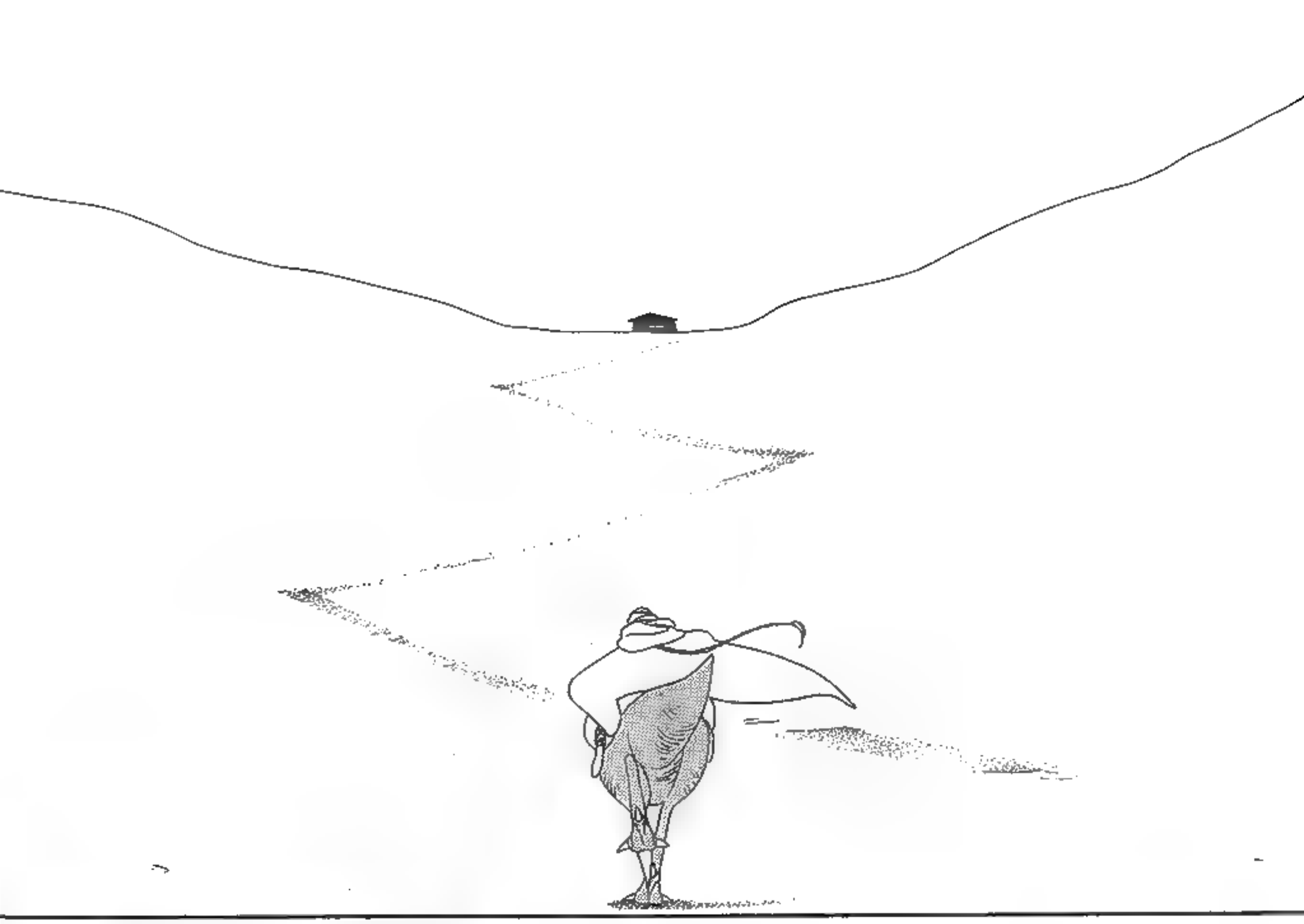
ALSO

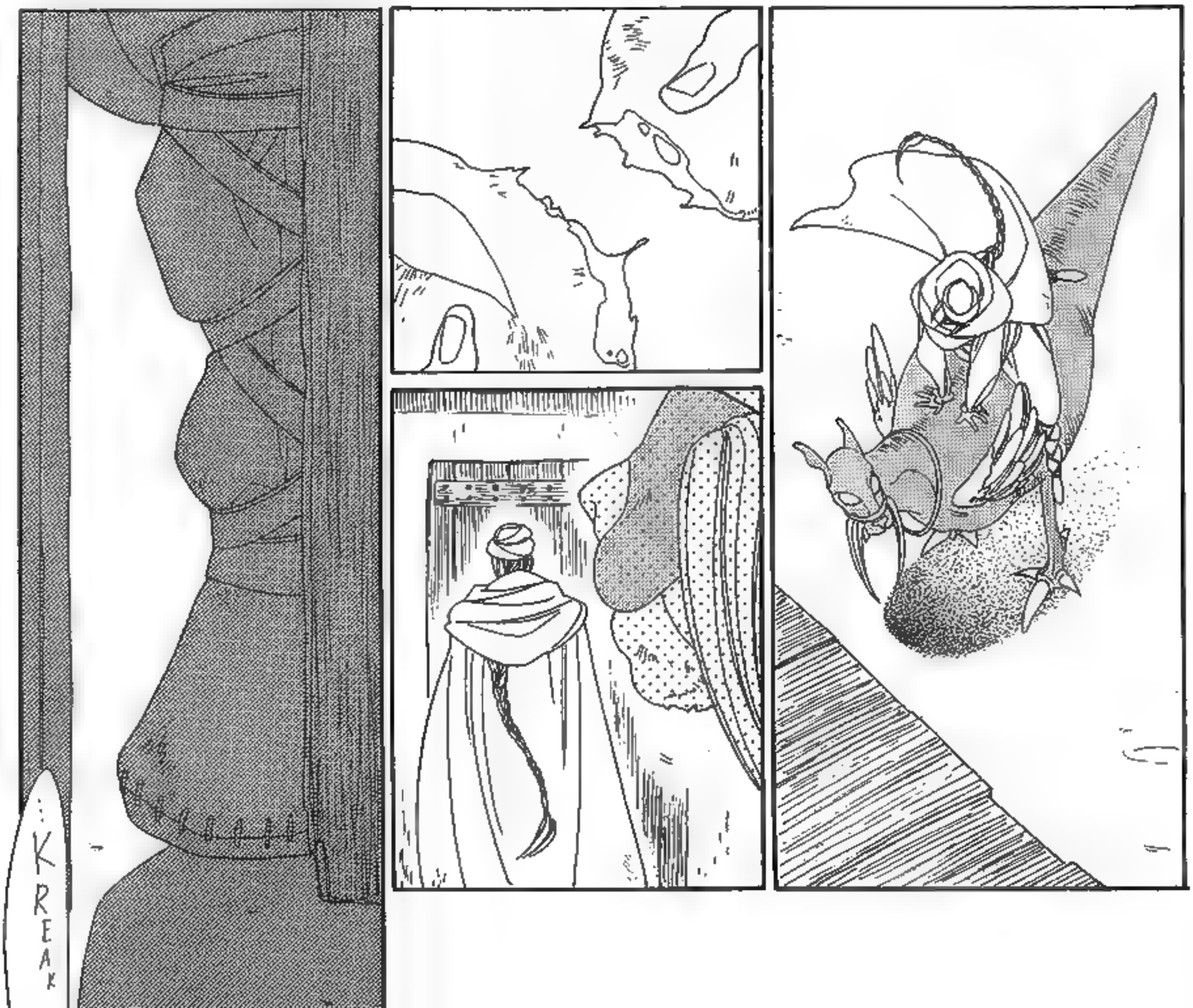
HERE.

THEY DON'T LOOK NICE BUT THE TASTE IS SUPERB.

TAKE THEM WITH YOU.

THANK YOU.




...KREAK

WELCOME BACK, ARDALTE.

I'M BACK, ARDOLTE.

IS IT OKAY FOR YOU TO BE UP?

I FEEL ALRIGHT TODAY.

I WAS ONLY KILLING TIME.

REALLY, IT'S AMAZING.

I'LL GET YOU FIRST-GRADE STRING NEXT TIME.

IT'S BETTER YOU AREN'T SO EXTRAVAGANT WITH ME.

BEAUTI-FULLY DONE.

...LET'S HAVE DINNER, SHALL WE?

MASTER GAVE ME SOME BREAD

AND WE STILL HAVE SOUP FROM LAST NIGHT TOO.

ALSO THERE'S SOME WINE LEFT, I THINK...

I'M QUITE CONTENT WITH HOW IT IS ARDALTE.

WHAT IS IT ARDALTE?
ARDALTE.

COULD I HAVE ONE?

THOSE ...

HANDI-CRAFTS YOU MADE

OF COURSE.

YOU CAN TAKE AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.

SHARA

SHARARA

ONE.

ONE LOAF.

SHA

ONE PLEASE.

TWO FOR ME.

SHARAN

I WILL HAVE

The next day

SHARA

SHARAN!

SHARAN

Since then,

The time I spent with her...

Increased more and more.

...LATELY,

YOU'VE BEEN COMING BACK RATHER LATE.

I AM NOT KEEPING ANYTHING FROM YOU

NOR WOULD I EVER.

AR-DOLTE.

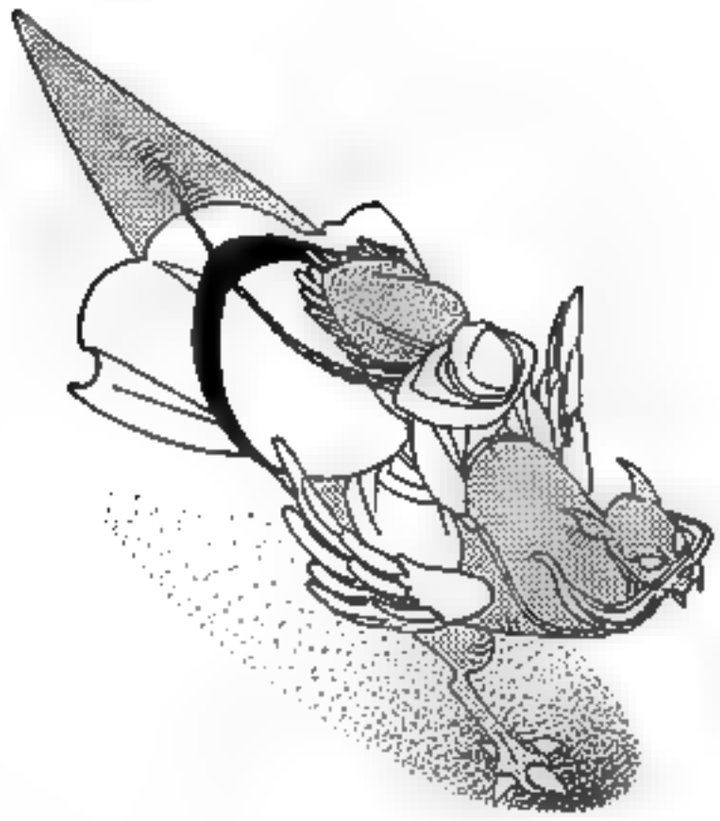
YOU PROBABLY KNOW MANY PEOPLE

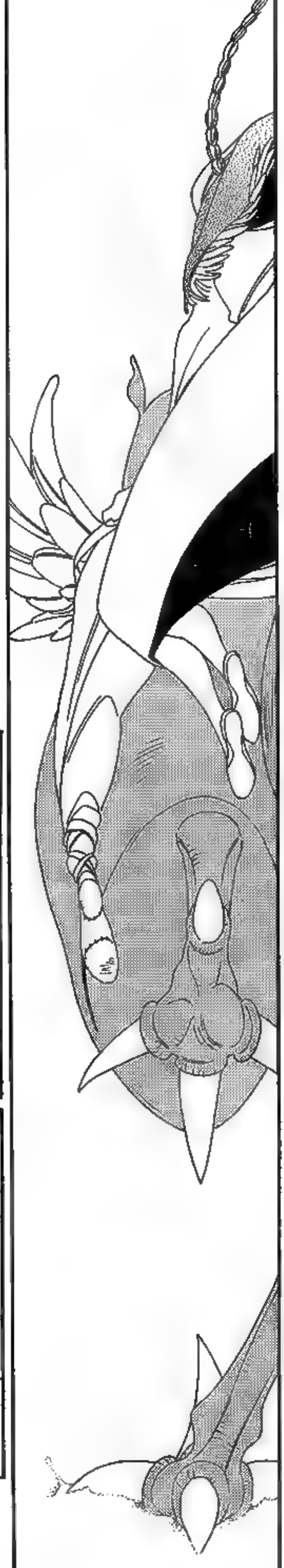
PLEASE DON'T MIND ME.

ARDOLTE

RIGHT NOW

I'M JUST...





I AM A LITTLE...
SCARED.
WHY?

THERE IS NOTHING TO BE SCARED OF.

WE ARE OF ONE SOUL, ALWAYS.

I AM ARDOLTE.

PLEASURE.

...OH MY

I SEE.

SO IT'S YOU WHOM HE GAVE MY HANDMADE ORNAMENT TO.

IT SUITS YOU WELL.

Thus we shared the girl.

Tableware in a set of three was placed at mealtimes.

She cooked for us.

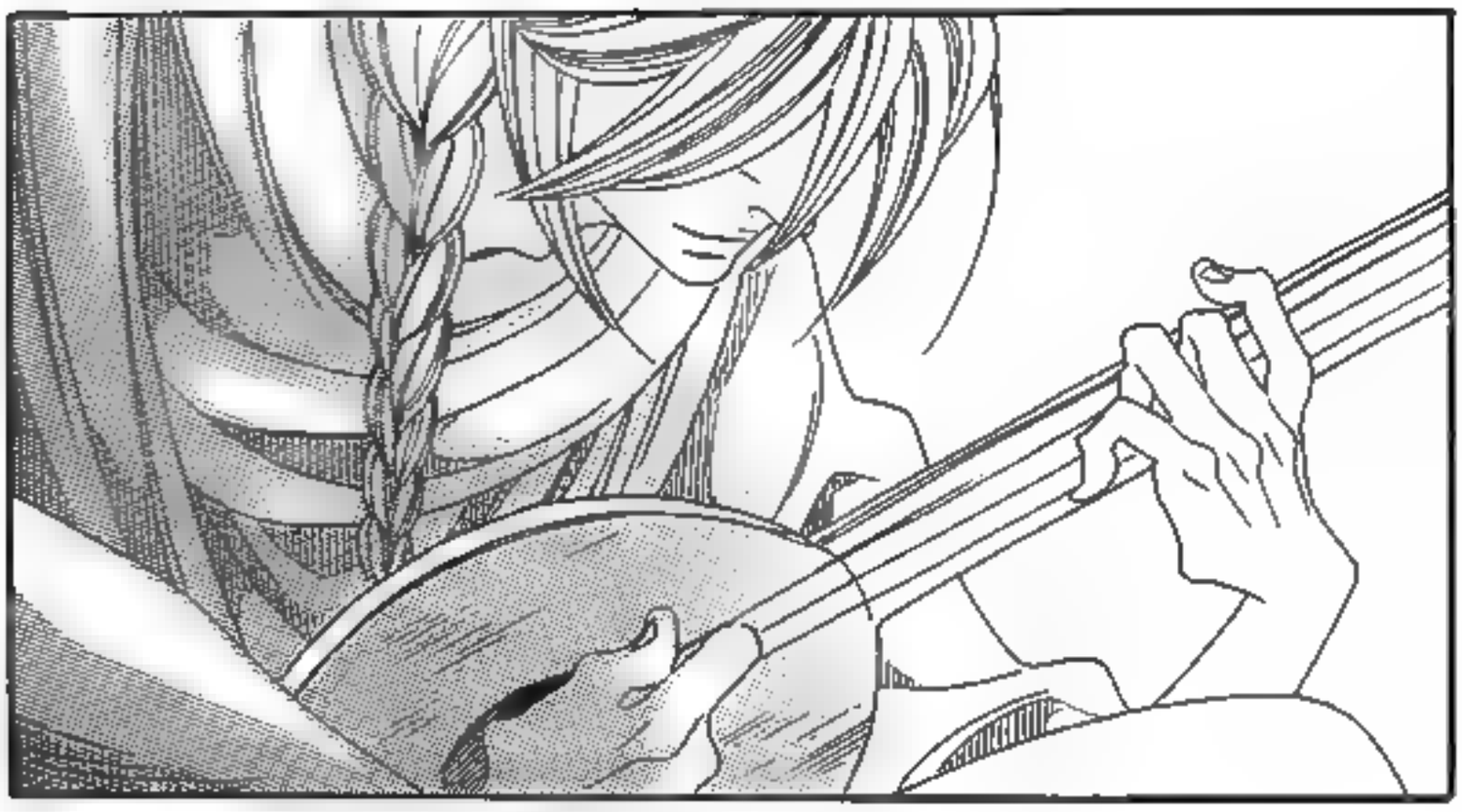
I went out to work.

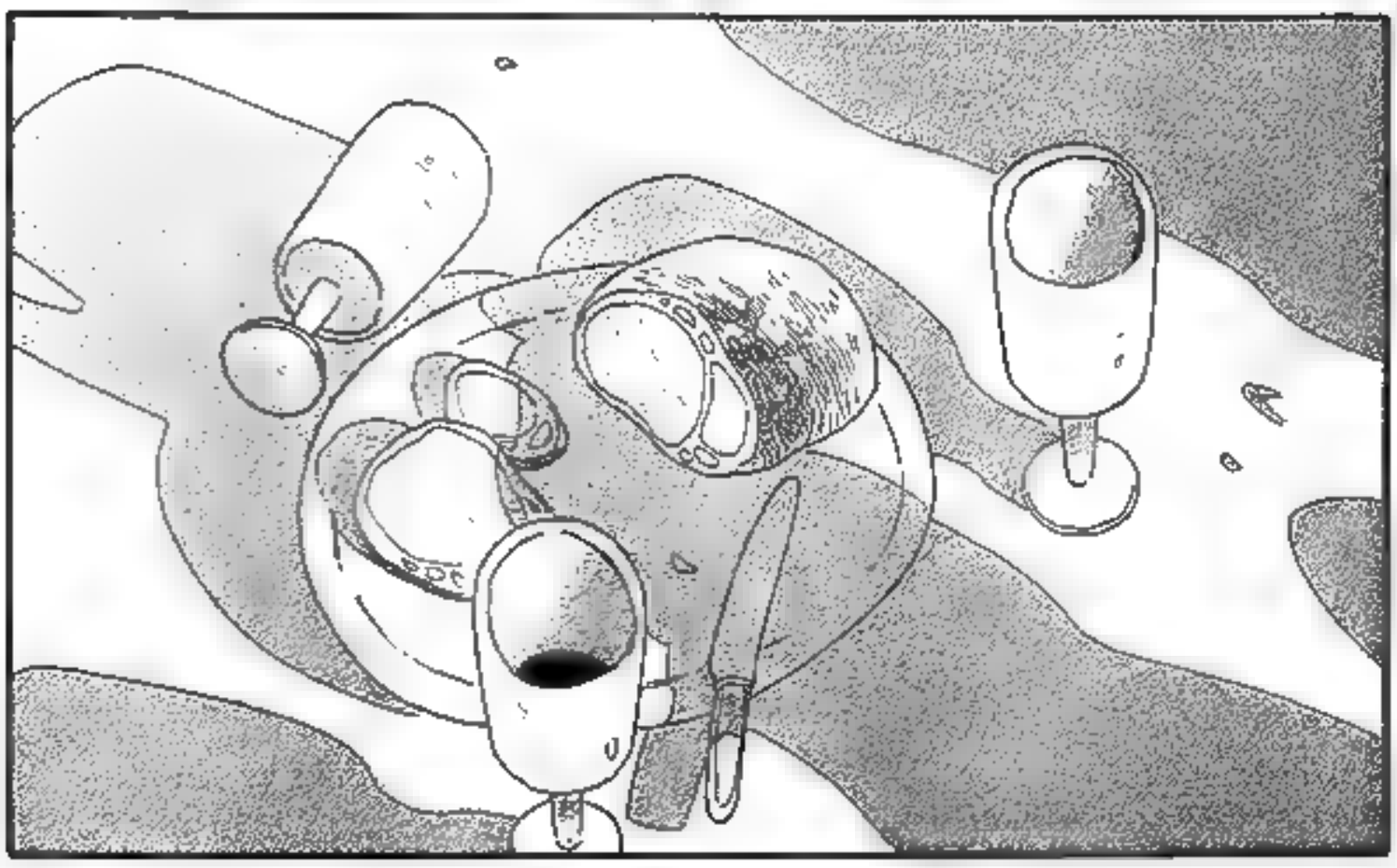
Beautiful tunes plucked and livened up mesmerising vespers.

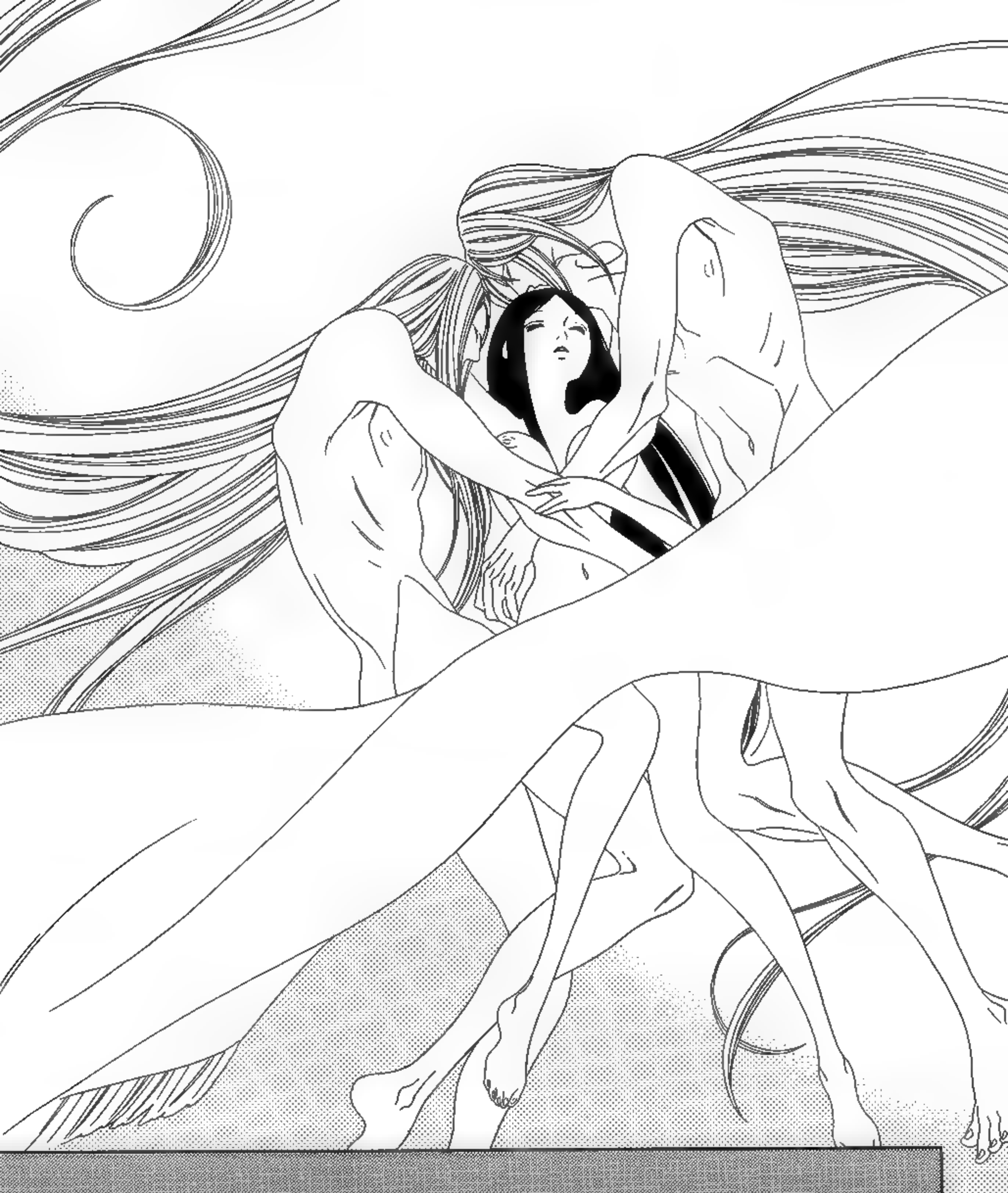
Songs were sung.

We leaped and danced.

And Ardolte devoted himself to his handicrafts.







And then she came to carry our child.

ISN'T IT ALL THE SAME, WHATEVER THE COLOUR.

YOU'RE RIGHT. IT DOESN'T MATTER AT ALL.

RIGHT? ARDALTE.

INDEED, ARDOLTE.

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT.

WE'LL SOON BE FATHERS.

LET'S DO OUR BEST AND GIVE THIS CHILD HAPPINESS.

WHAT COLOUR OF IRIDES WILL THIS CHILD HAVE, I WONDER.

Ardolte's ornaments could call for high price even in the city.

I eventually quit the job at the bakery.

Those ornaments alone could provide for our living.

LET'S WORK HARD.

INDEED

By that time,

HEY.

THUD

GAA

COUGH

COUGH

COUGH

COUGH

I

saw
it.

No,

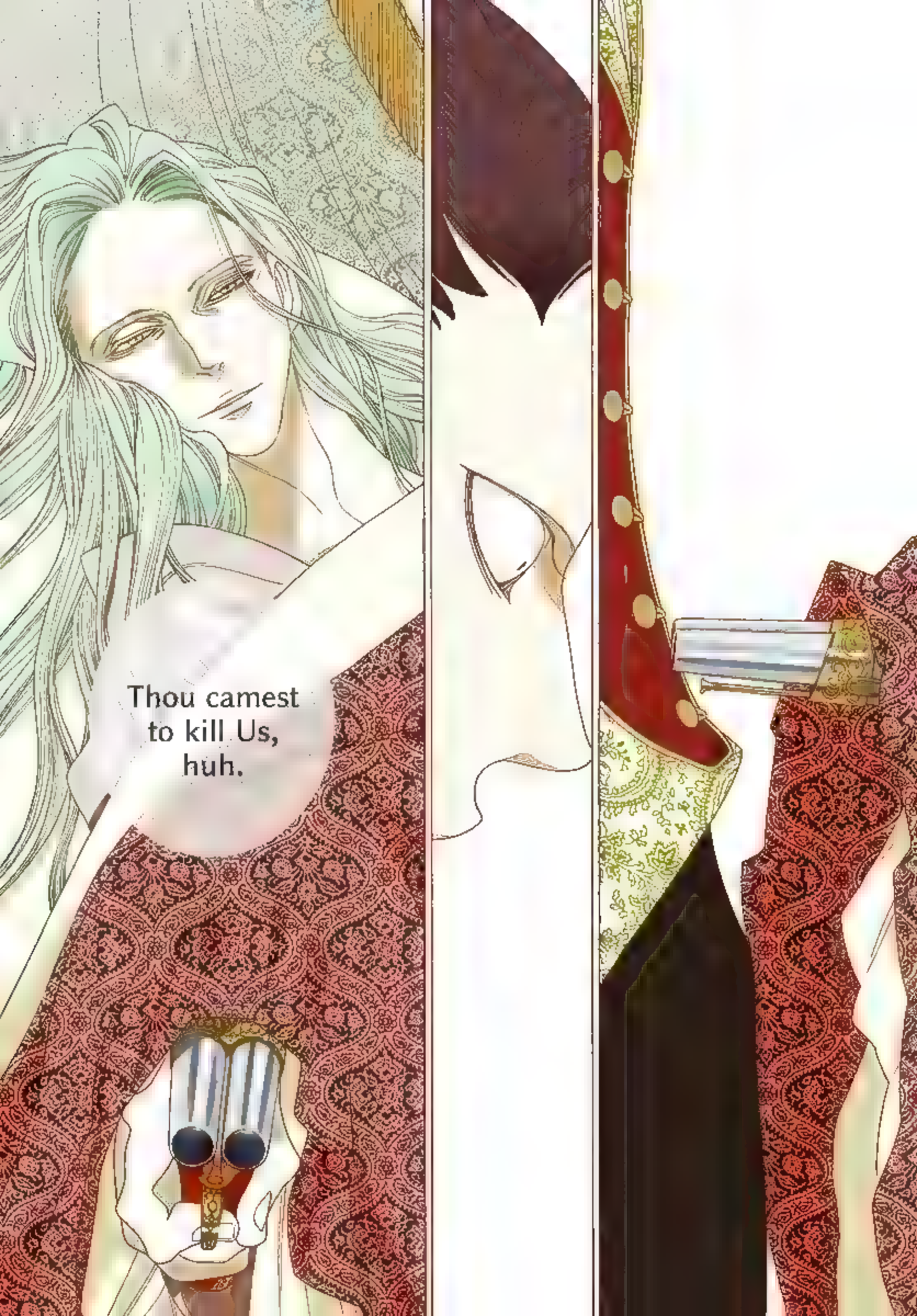
I probably knew it all along.

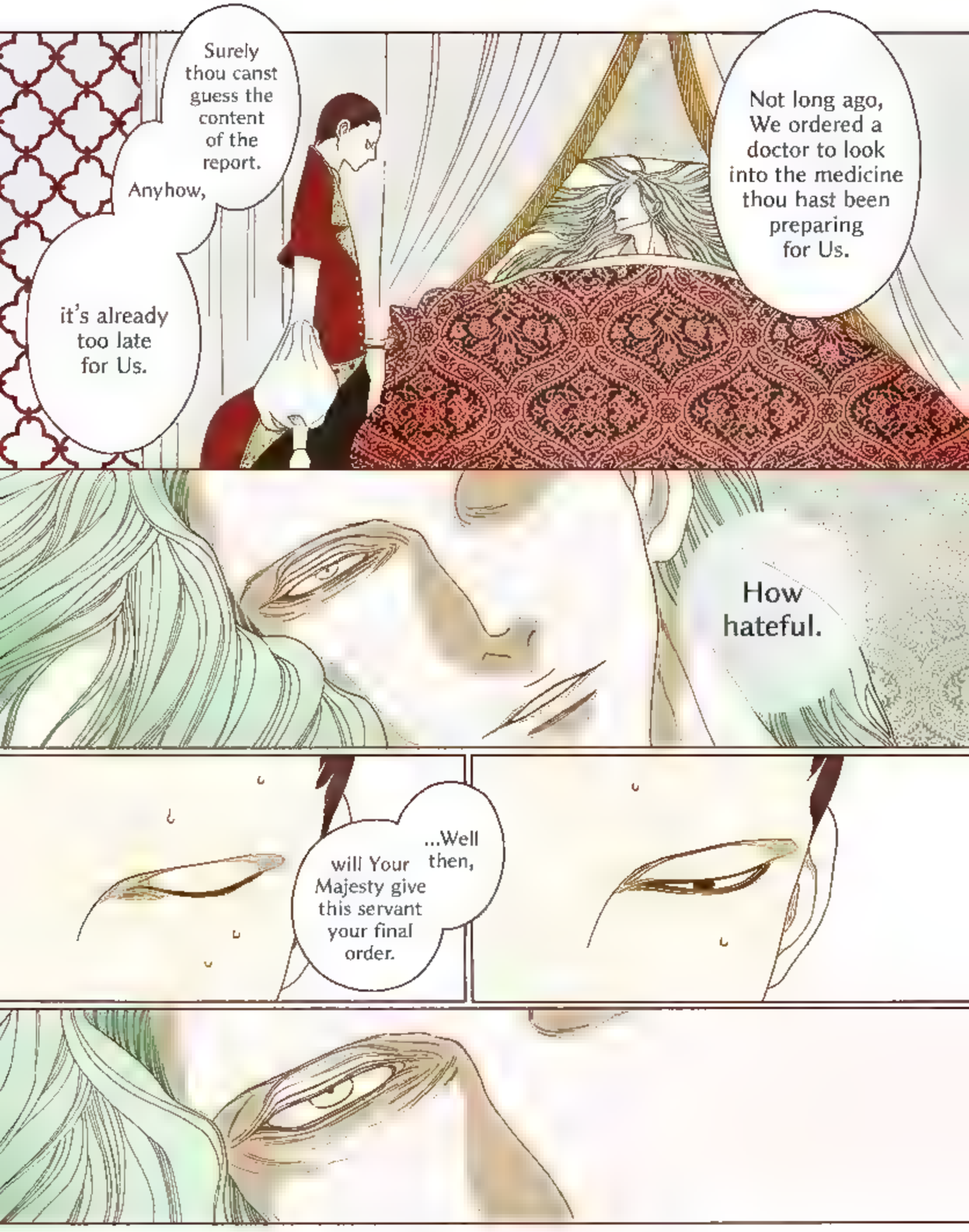
I was

We were ...

ARDALTE?!

Everything dawned on me then.


Thou camest to kill Us, huh.


Surely thou canst guess the content of the report.
Anyhow,
it's already too late for Us.
Not long ago, We ordered a doctor to look into the medicine thou hast been preparing for Us.
How hateful.
...Well then, will Your Majesty give this servant your final order.

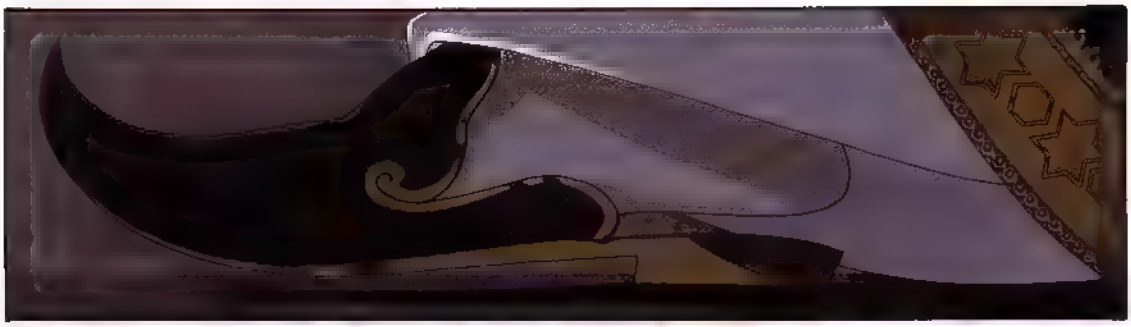
Thou shalt continue to serve Us as Our aide.

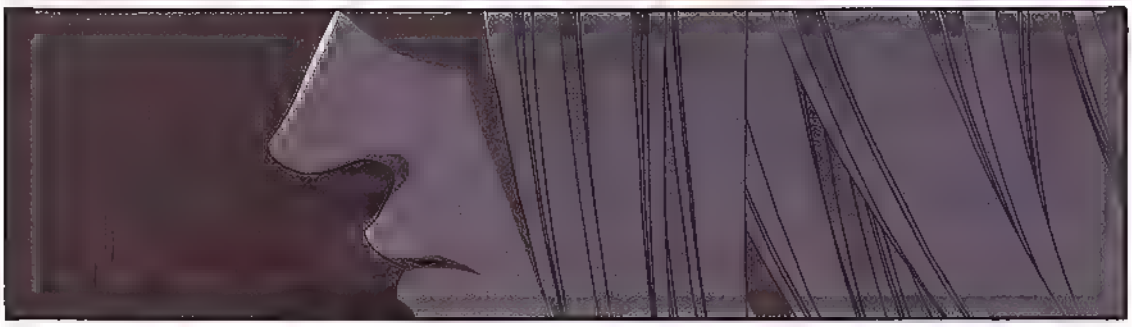
Then,

when Death comes to greet Us, sever thy life with this gun.

In any case, once thou finishest thy task, thy life will be no more.
Thou wilt bear the weight of this treason and be thrown into a grave.
Wherefore, We'll allow thee to be Our companion on the journey to the nether world.
To wit,
for sharing a ten-year time with Us, Thou canst at least be Our diversion.

it has been
belonging to a
cul-de-sac.
...If this
humble
aide may.
All
as
You
wish,
my
King.





シリーズ
王国物語
TALES OF THE KINGDOM

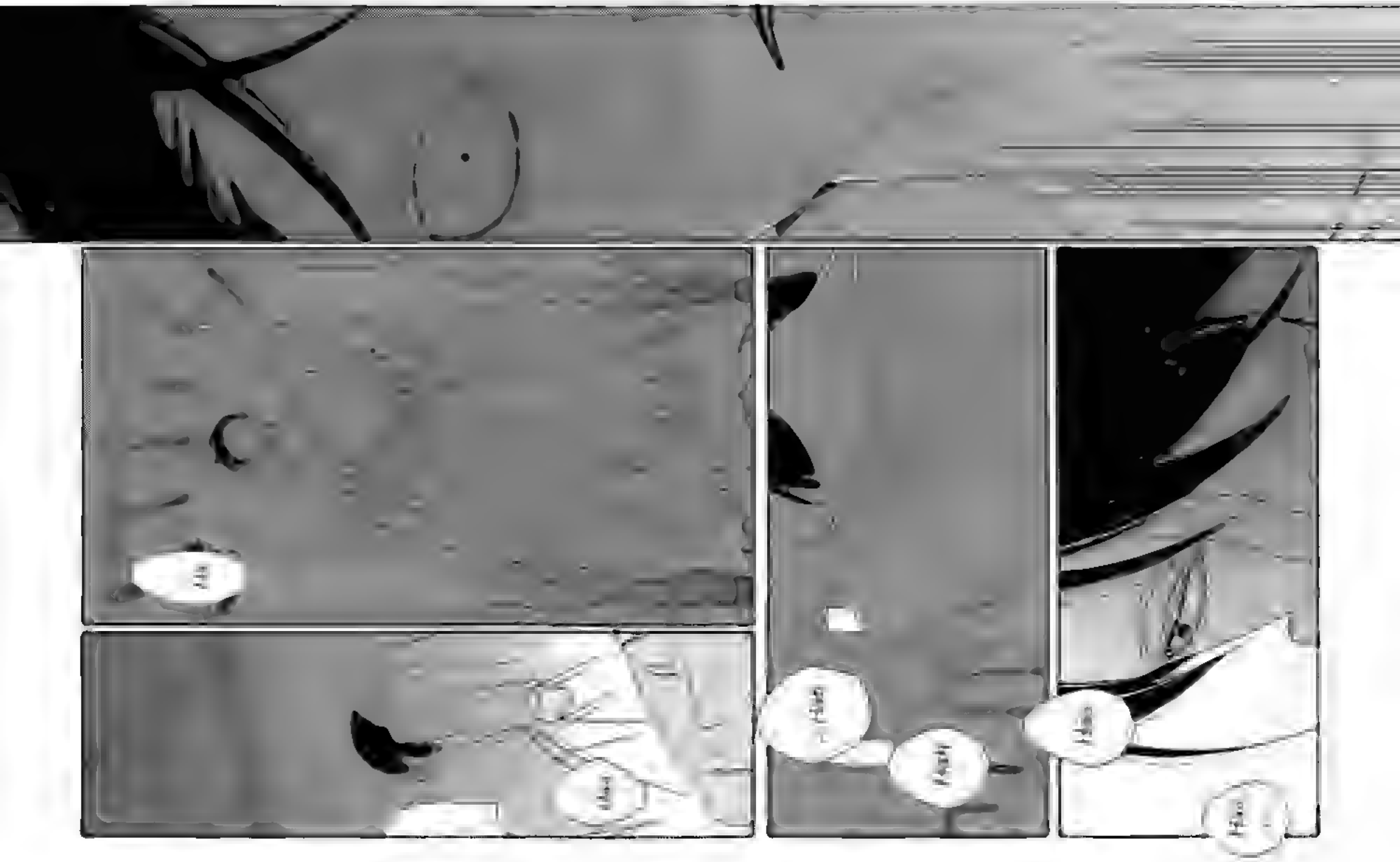
The King is absolute.

(The third tale)

KING & AIDE

episode 2.

中村明日美子 Asumiko Nakamura



—There has been a report of suspicious movements in the southern neighbouring Kingdom of Pean, Your Majesty.

Many large vessels were spotted docking at their harbour recently.

that they are building closer relationships through trade with the other kingdoms across the West Sea.

There are also rumours

Though a small nation, they have the maritime hub—

Pean

Besides

it does not strike Us as strange for large ships to frequent Pean's ports, considering their thriving trade.

But Sire, King Chanya is a cunning man.

has signed a peace treaty with Us.

He is building up the country's wealth and military power.

When the time comes...

We also have an ace up Our sleeve.

Run!

Step back, wo- man!

The uma!

Some- body capture it!

It's running wildly.

Stay back!

We can't get near it.

Watch out!

Some-body catch it!

Where's the blow-gun?

No! Don't hurt it!

Hold these.

Huh?

And bring a net.

HAA

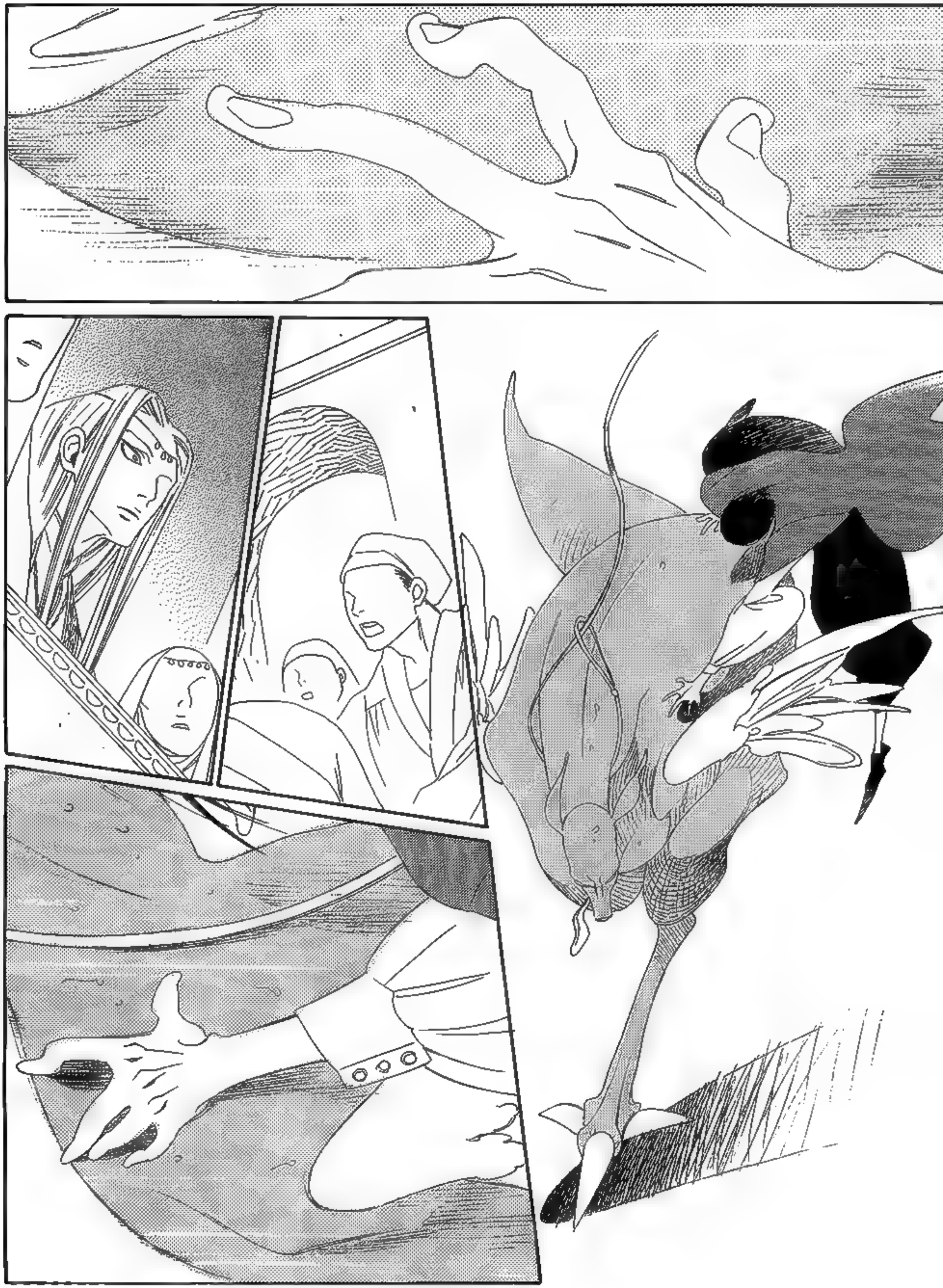
Close in around it!

HAA.

TP.

Come back!

Hey, boy!



Whoa.

HA
A

HF

HA

Good boy.

HA

There.

Whoa.

PT

PT

Has it calmed down?

I heard that around ten of them were delivered earlier today.

Will this even be okay?

What's going on?

Isn't that the *uma* for the ceremony?

it has quite a temper ...

Life be damned if we were sold pups.

Hey, Mongol.

Right away, Your Majesty.

...That was quite something.

Impressive,

We say.

Thou art the first person We met with such a command over *uma*.

Your Majesty is too kind.

Answer Us.

Is that something all Mongols share?

There is no place for someone who cannot ride *uma* in the clan, Sire.

...We have been riding on *uma-back* since the time we were in our mothers' womb.

Hmph.

Then,

what about this?

Know how to use it?

It is, with bows and arrows.

Take it.

You did mention that the Mongol history was built on wars.

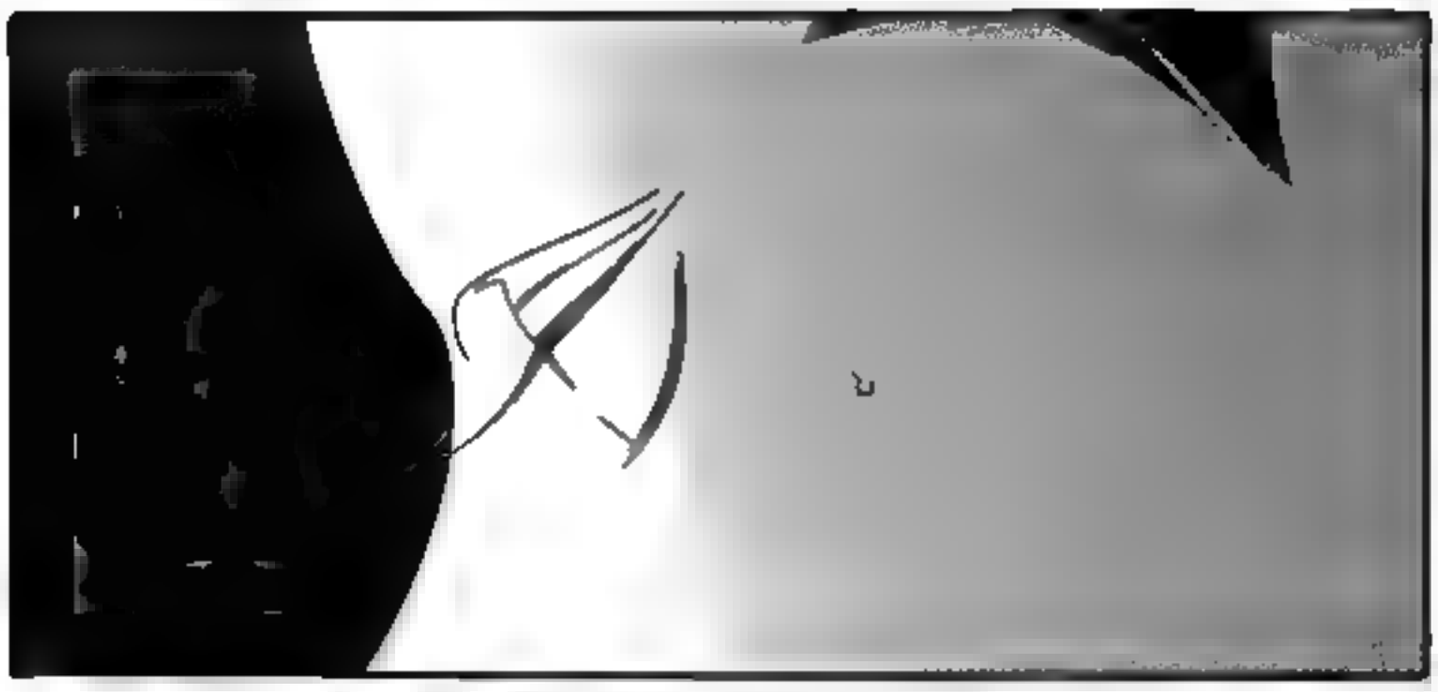
I do not, Sire.

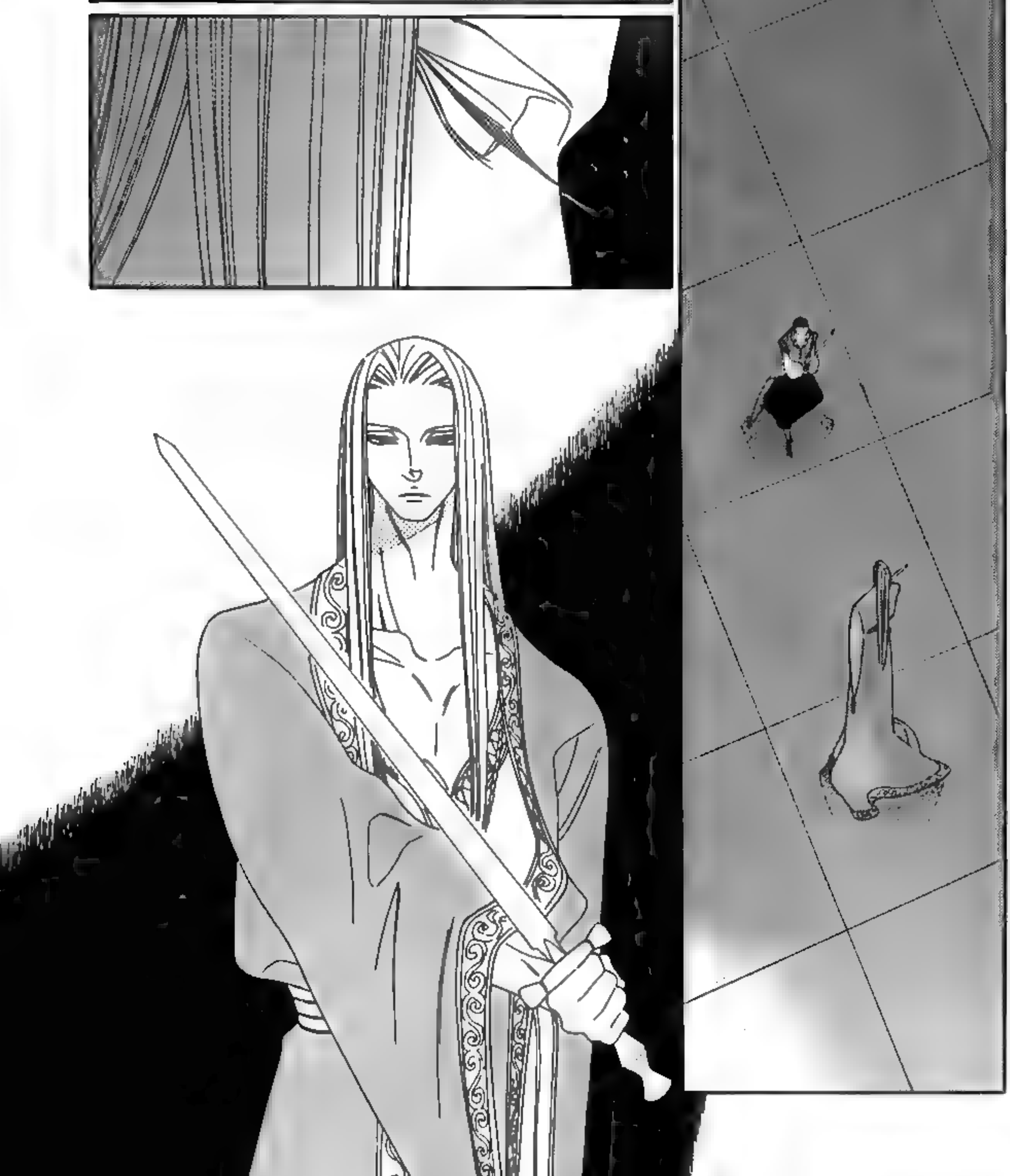
Don't touch the blade.

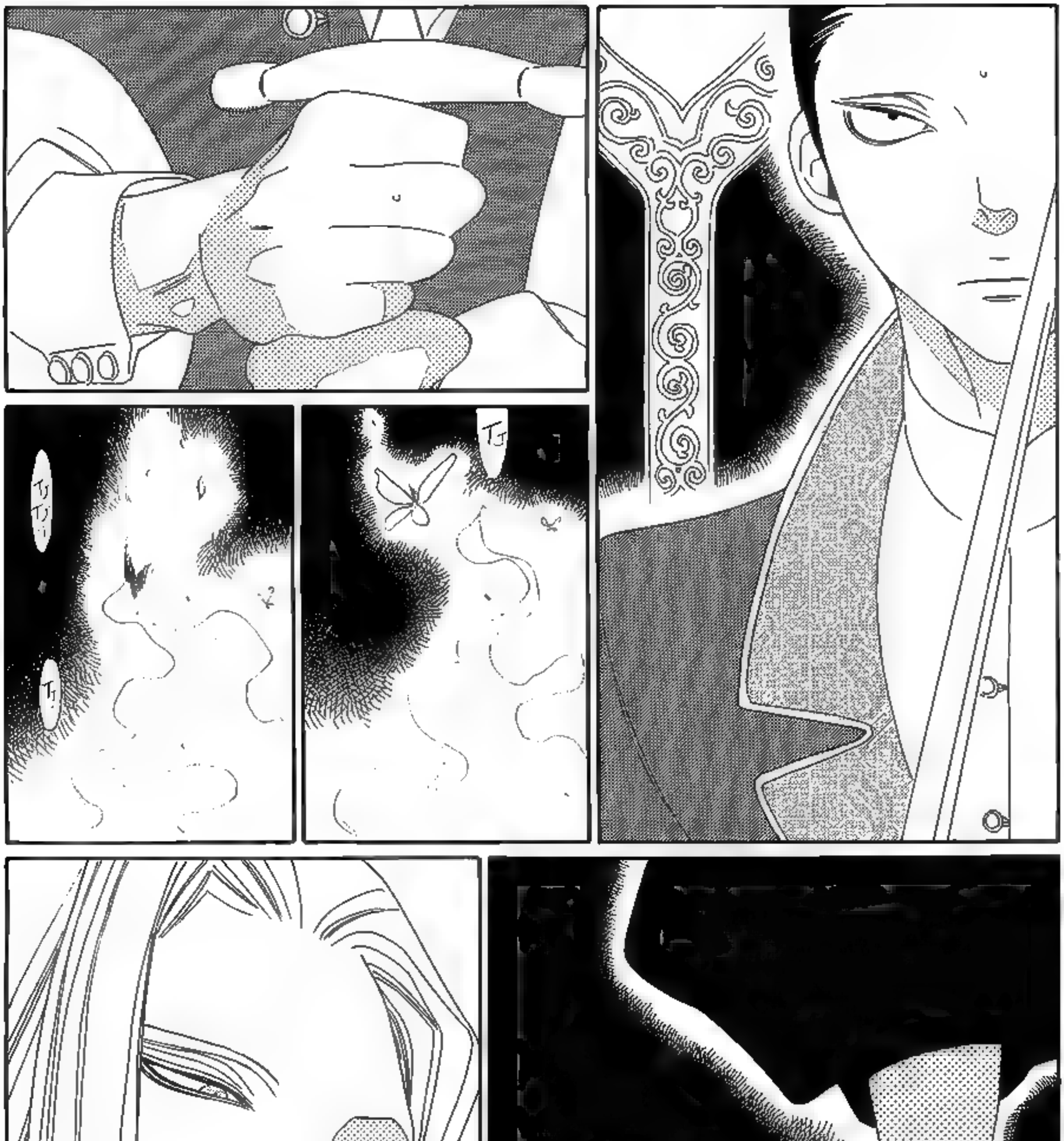
WHP

Hold the handle firmly with both hands.

KLNK







What dost thou think?

...?

With what

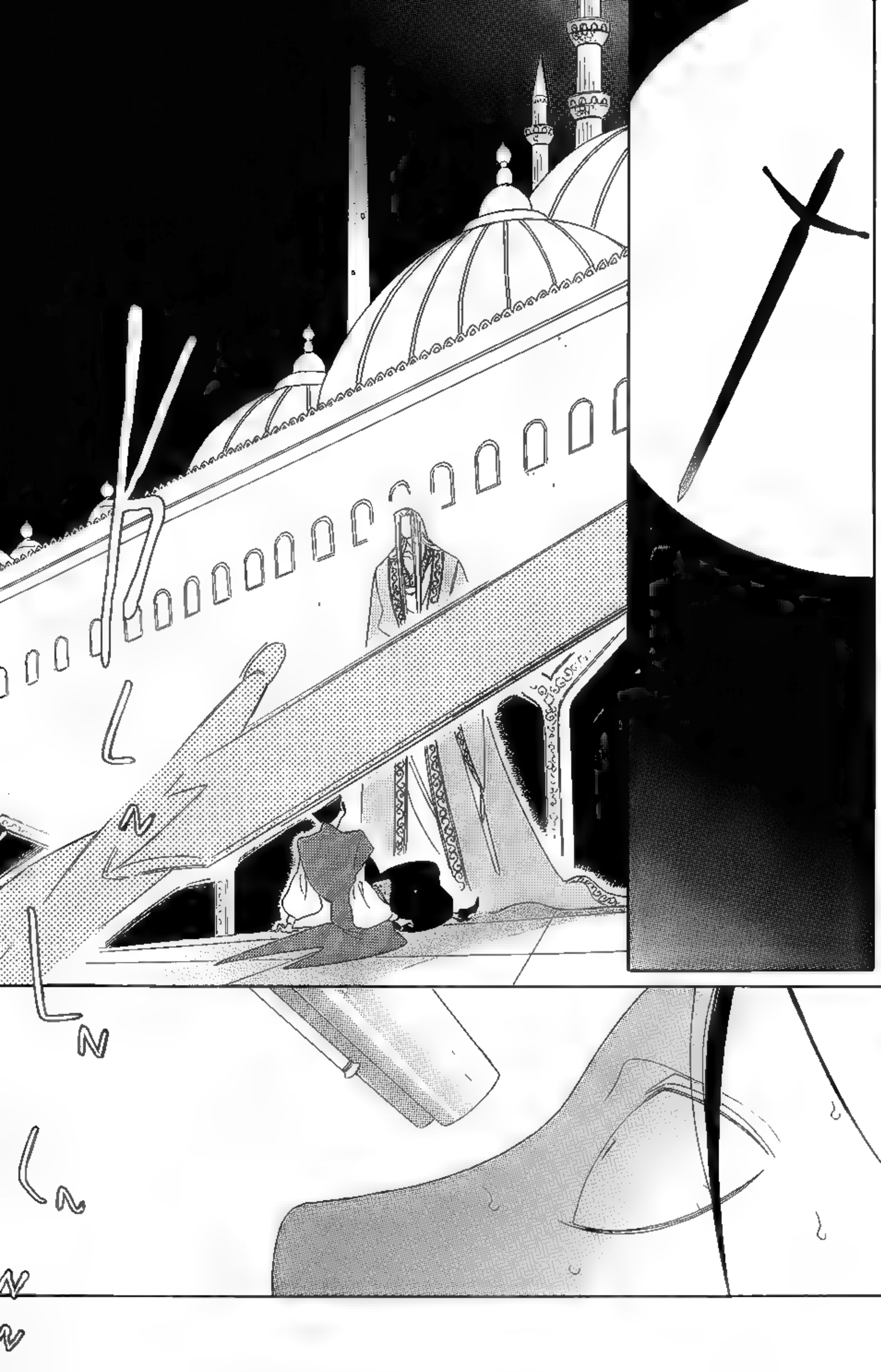
shouldst thou

kill Us with?

...D—

...this subject dare not imagi—

...



What is this!

Stand up!

It's fine.

TP TP TP

What's happened?

Your Majesty.

Hey, Mongol.

Your Majesty.

He was following Our order.

Use thy left hand.

What is the king doing?

His Majesty is simply lost at the court.

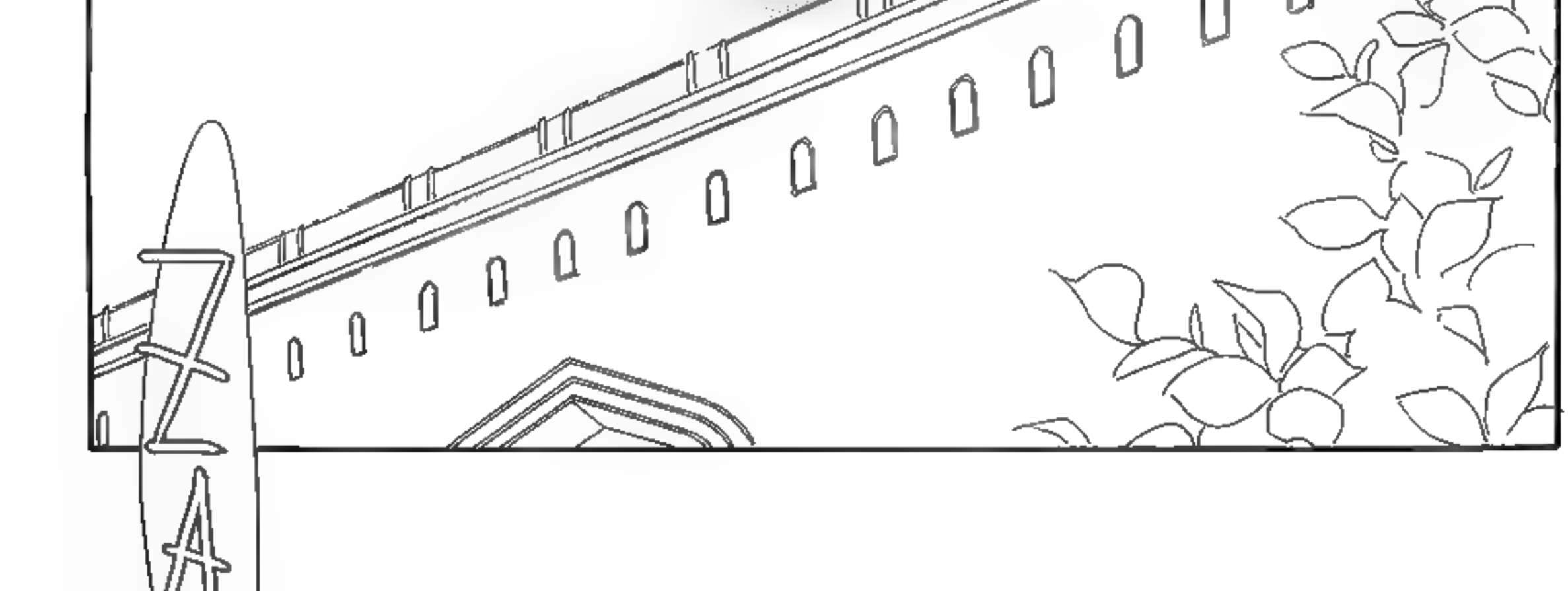
The king sure is whimsical.

Isn't His Majesty paying a lot of attention to that barbarian brat?

We all know He is better at swinging a sword than waving a quill.

He He He

Watch your tongue.



Badges of honour, huh.

At ease.

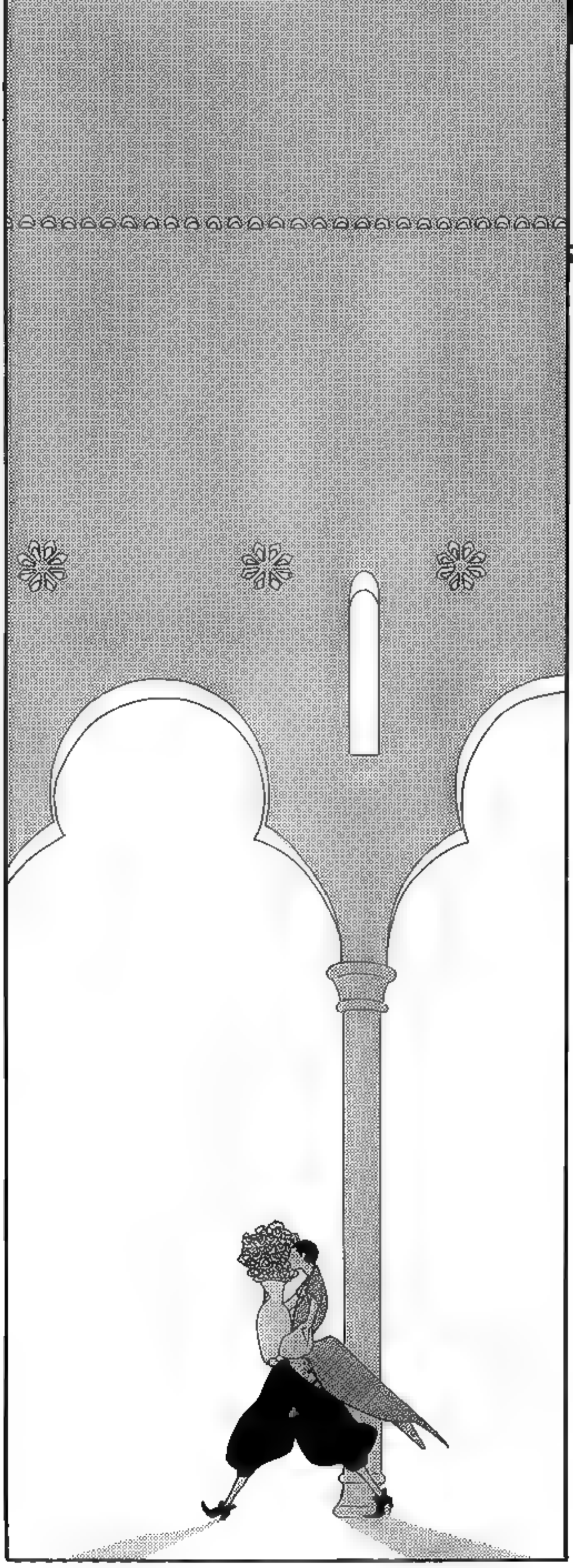
I, as well, am familiar with how intense my elder brother's training can be.

He often made me cry.

...'Mongol' was it?

Yes, Your Highness.

*I am not questioning your ability to comprehend, but just in case this is confusing to some people: the king simply calls his attendant 'Mongol' because he is a Mongol--originally *Han* in Japanese, see the note in the previous chapter--so here, his brother is referring the name with which the king is calling him.



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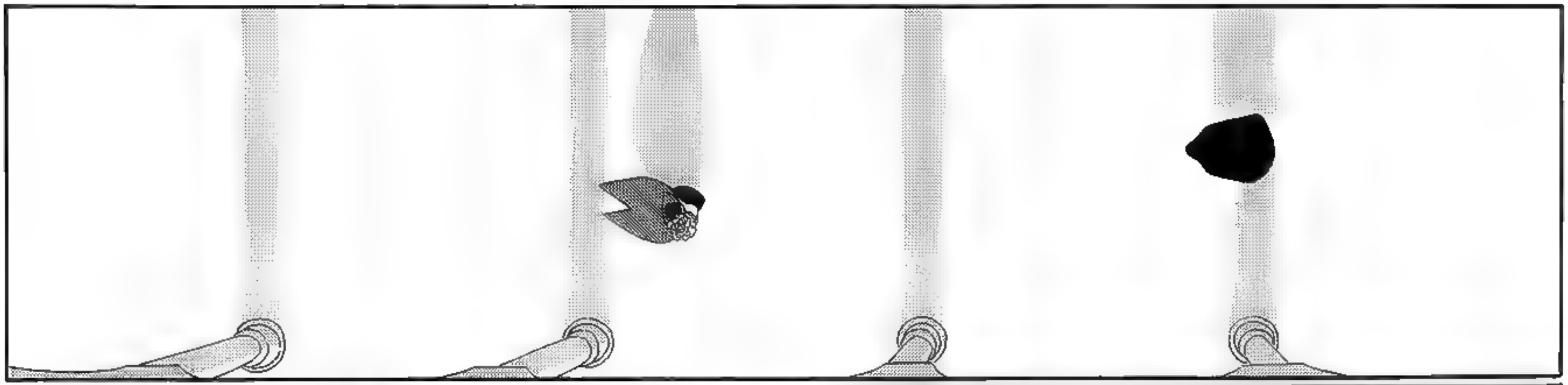


...There is no doubt about it.

That is Ranka's son.

王国物語
TALES OF THE KINGDOM

(The fourth tale)

Once a nomad,
now a royal aide
by
His Majesty's side.

The hidden past which shall not pass his lips.

KING & AIDE

episode 3.

中村明日美子 Asumiko Nakamura

Two boy riders and the clopping of hooves across the vast desert of an age long past.

HA

HA

HA

HA

TP

TP

TP

TP

Shao!

Did Mari desert you again?

Dao.

I've never been able to form a bond with one.

Uma don't like me.

Haha

I can hear our forefathers weep.

I know.

...Dao.

The one who will succeed to Father's name is you,

Shao.

Think about it.

We have barely enough young men in our clan as it is. We can't afford to lose male help like that.

It's absurd.

I hardly count as a loss.

Father would never agree to it,

that old, barbaric custom.

Even if I were to inherit the family's title.

True. One bellow from Mother was all it took to send you running.

The fit women always help me.

With my weak constitu- tion, I can't say that I've been doing the work of a grown man.

Heh.

You're no match for her either.

You said it.

Dao!

Shao!

Mother.

Thank goodness, you're both back.

When I saw that only Mari had returned,

Look, Mother.

Did she leave you behind again? Hopeless boy.

It's too heavy for Tem to have two men riding him.

I was quite worried.

That's not the kind of place a kid should go in alone.

Oh my, what a fine *usagi*.

Did you go to the forest again, Shao?

We caught some game.

You two are such a handful.

Two peas in a pod,

but absurdly different flavours!

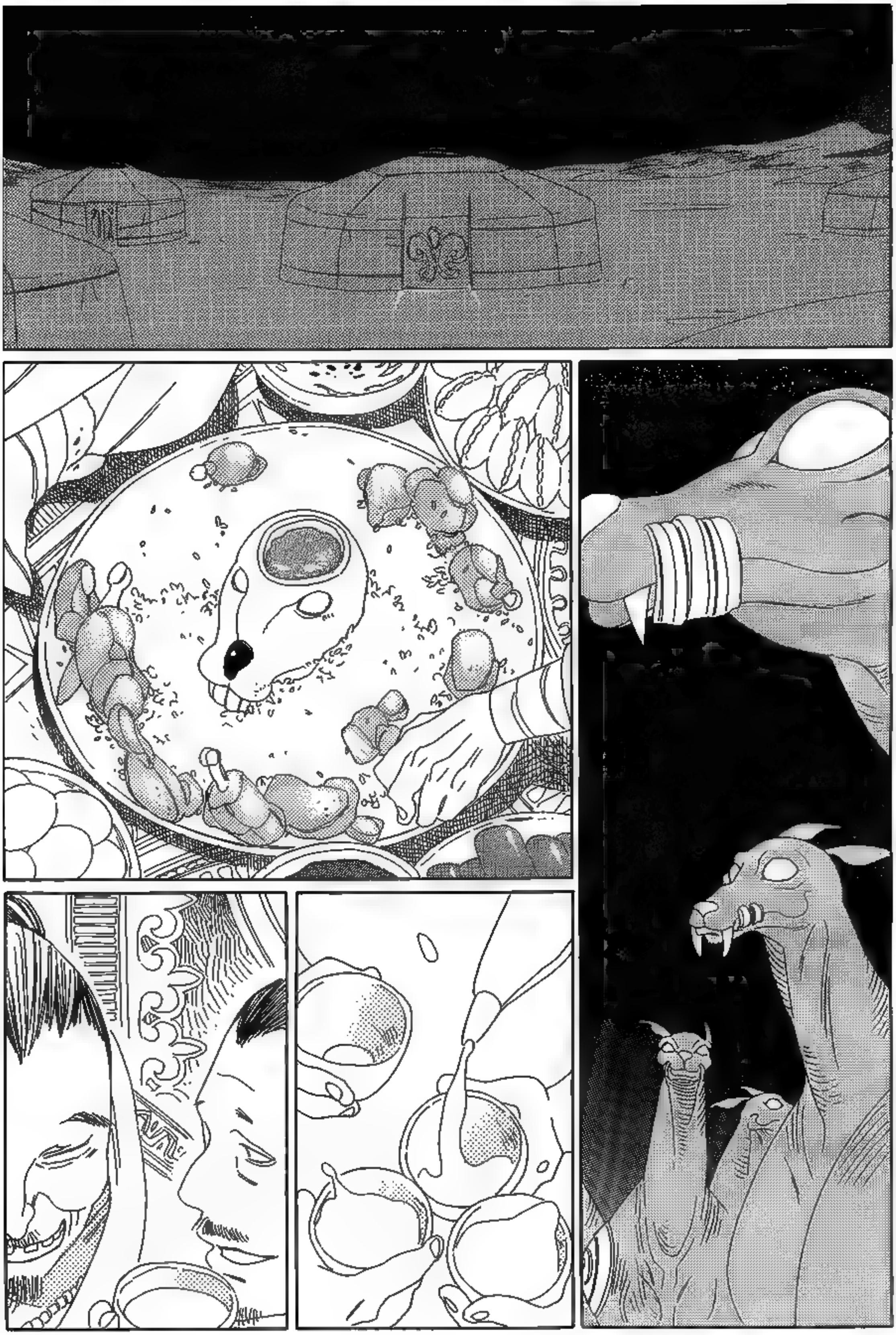
Uh-huh.

Your granduncle is here.

Are we having visitors, Mother?

Soon is your coming of age.

They're here to discuss it.



CLAP

CLAP

Good.

Great!

How old are you both next month?

Sixteen, Grand-uncle.

Hmph. Your mother has raised you well. And single-handedly, no less.

The two hearts beat as one.

What are the treasures of the family?

Dao?

Finally adults, huh?

and ensuring the continuation of our bloodline, Granduncle.

Protecting the lands of our forefathers,

Living in harmony with *uma*,

Hmph.

But traditions are nothing less than the wisdom of our forebears.

There are some who see our traditions as obsolete and make light of them.

Crossing out the myriad paths,

All for the family...

Indeed.

until but one remains.

That is a tradition.

Dao.

Shao.

I cannot stress enough the importance of following the ancient teachings.

Shao!

Grand-uncle!

Before the next moon, the two of you will undergo the Maraukai ritual.

As you yourself have said,

our hearts beat as one.

We help each other. We believe in each other. Therefore, for us to hate each other,

or even worse!

Shao,

your child might stab Dao's child.

To hurt one another! The family's prosperity certainly does—

Still,

Dao,

your child might shoot Shao's child.

who is above,

and who is below,

Especially since you two were born under the same star,

The distinction must be made clear.

...I'll take it.

Anyone can see it!

Stop!

I don't have the strength to lead the family.

I can't even draw a bow!

Or ride an *uma*!

That's not what I'm saying!

You think you'll become stronger by grovelling?!

Stop it! You're just venting out your frustration!

No one sees me as a man!

It's just—

Just go to sleep.

Es ist auf
dem Weg zu
den Geld.

Oder

Shouldn't you be asleep?

Come on, don't sulk.

Hey, have you heard?

In the past, *Uma* used to fly in the sky.

And even those are clipped while they're still foals.

But you know,

Now, their wings are mere fan-sized feather-plumes at most.

Ever since I heard that story,

sometimes, when I rode *uma*,

I felt like I was flying in the sky.

they say the ancient *uma* had wings so large they could enwrap their entire bodies.

And they winnowed the air along the blue.

Haa...

Dao...

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Shao.

though he can't have kids, there shouldn't be any issues in terms of night-time activities.

Oh, well.

The surgical techniques have advanced so much,

Iveel.

Maraukai in this day and age, huh. I was quite surprised.

Heh

We don't know if it's Dao.

Still, I feel bad for Dao.

Contrary to what you think, that's quite a nasty thing to say, y'know.

Iveel.

Shao.

Is that true?

I'm done for.

your mother's looking all over for you.

Iveel,

What're you two tittle-tattling about?

Aunt.

Mother.

Also, tell her it's her lamb's turn to be killed.

Shall I go catch some game in the forest?

No.

How carefree, these men.

Well, if they want a feast.

We're killing another lamb?

That boy has always been a chatterbox.

You're thinking of going alone again, aren't you?

There are wild *uma* in the forest.

I'll go with Dao.

Good morning, Mother.

...You know, that boy...

Dao.

I'll go with you,

Shao.

It's pointless to grovel.

Like you said,

And then,

Though I cannot dictate the outcome,

I can still carve my own path with these two hands.

I, too,
will gallop
in the sky
like you.

Hoar frost's beginning to melt.

Watch out, it's slippery.

Whoa!

SLIP

You keep looking down.

Leave the footing to her.

You should focus on clearing the branches and twigs.

I know.

Don't force yourself.

There.

Don't aim yet...

I know.

Define its territory and wait for the right moment.

Read the *usagi's* move-ments.

Dao.

I'll go check it out for a bit.

...It's not coming back.

Even if that's the case, it'd be impossible for us to catch up with it in this forest.

It probably ran away.

Just wait.

What is it, Mari?

JERK

AARGH

Dao?!

What's wrong?! Dao!

Dao!

THWK

...EEP

Crap.

GRAW

Shao!
Run!

To be continued